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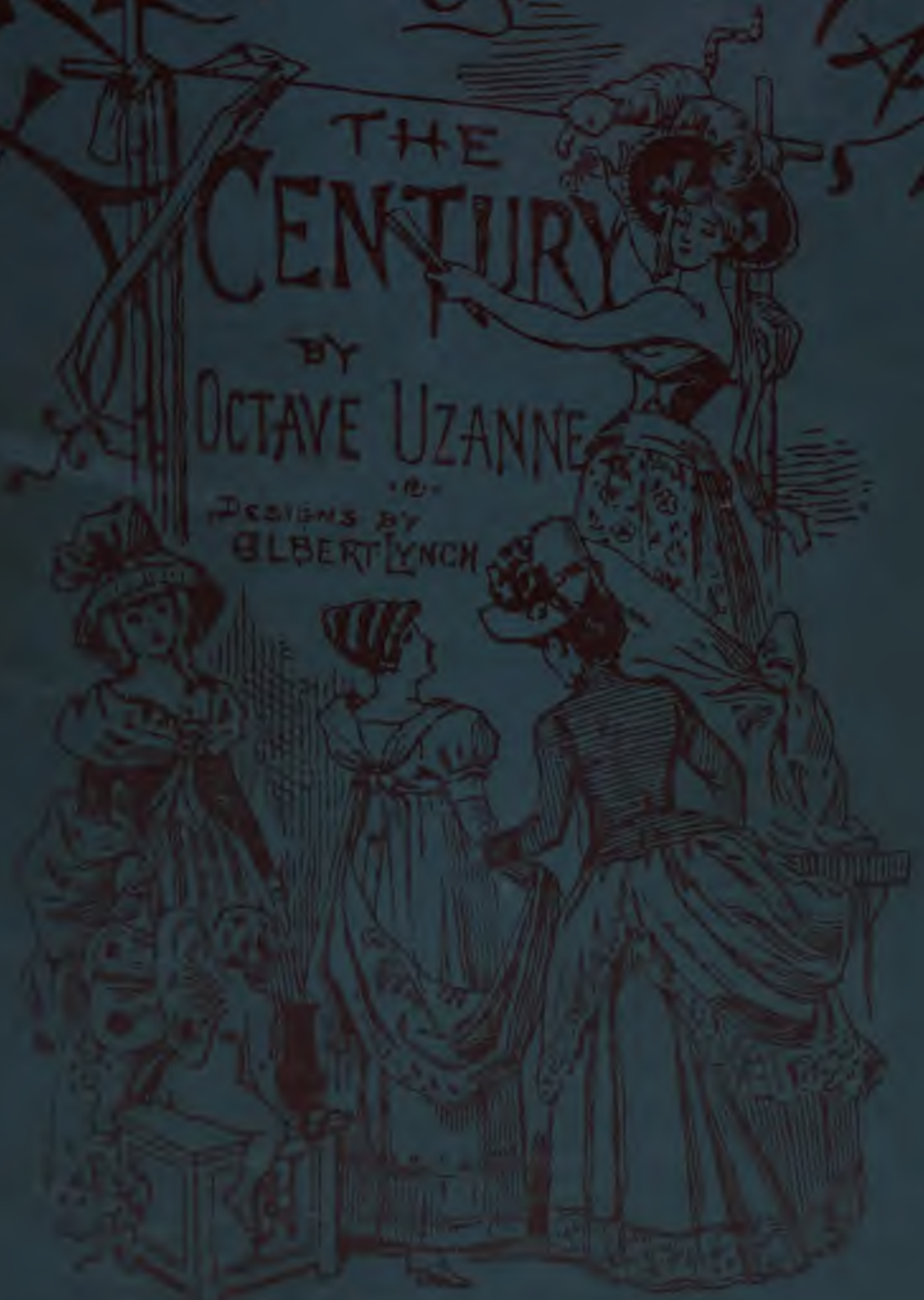
# The Frenchwoman of the Century

By Octave Uzanne

Designs by Albert Lynch



*Gift of*
*Mrs. David Canfield*

# THE

# FRENCHWOMAN

## OF THE CENTURY.

# THE

# FRENCHWOMAN

## OF THE CENTURY.

# THE FRENCHWOMAN OF THE CENTURY

*FASHIONS — MANNERS — USAGES*

BY

OCTAVE UZANNE

ILLUSTRATIONS IN WATER COLOURS BY ALBERT LYNCH

ENGRAVED IN COLOURS BY EUGÈNE GAUJEAN

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# SMALL TALK IN THE VAN.

BY

SEBASTIAN SANCHEZ.

*SMALL TALK IN THE VAN.*

IFFICULTIES enough of all kinds there are to be overcome in the domain of artistic productions, but I believe, from my own personal experience, that there are none more arduous, more insurmountable, more discouraging than those which surge at every instant, at every turn of the leaf, in the making up of a handsome book, conceived in a fashion apart from the common style and from ordinary routine.

In every innovation dreamed over, ripened, *incubated* during long hours, numerous details remain in the perfidious penumbra of theories; and so, when we come to practice, to material execution, everything threatens to sink through in the incredible and indescribable complexity of the different transformations necessitated by the faithful reproduction of an original illustration.

It seems, too, that everything betrays the director of the work, from time to interpreters, that everything comes in opposition to caressed projects, and that absolute harmony is impossible in the concourse of talents which he calls to his aid.

One desires to perfect an exceptional book, and imagines he can inspire with his ideas, his ardours, his *pushings* towards the regions of the beautiful a whole world of executants, and then is vexed to encounter involuntary defections, mediocre results, which arise often from this oddity, that the artist was too much of a workman and that the workman felt himself too much of an artist.

Ah! the wings of wax which bear us toward the ideal melt at the first sun of human realities and cause us to fall, broken by our efforts, bruised by our fall, into that eternal sheep-walk of the commonplace and the *very near*.

The public which seeks, not without reason, the *coquettish*, the *gracious*, the *amiable*, in every case in preference to the *correct*, the *severe*, the *impeccable*, in the familiar decoration of a volume, which loves a *flirting* look at the vignettes rather than

to take possession of the very body of the work —the public, which is ignorant almost always of the processes of manufacture as well as of the researches infinitely combined for the happy disposition of a text or the matching and favourable marriage of colours, that same public, in fine, which judges with a cool eye, inexorably practical, the work which is presented to it, will never know what this pretty thing which it favours with its attention has cost of cares, of fatigues, of solicitudes, and of despairs.

A book!—who ever would imagine it? it is written, printed, stitched together, and sold at a shop.

In truth—since this lady, under the figure of an ornamental letter, seems to be rising here quite naked and enamoured of my inkstand,—I must confess that this publication of a *volume de luxe* is not so rudimentary, not so accessible, especially to the first comer, and that its gestation is long and incredibly feverish. The result of its success is rarely found in relation with the bustle it has excited; it is an ungrateful child one has given birth to, and transforms not in truth into vain prettinesses even, at a reasonable reckoning, all the artistic riches and the hopes with which it has been endowed. It will have the lot of frivolous beings, the art to please, not that to captivate; some grace will be accorded to it, but none will stop—as they ought—at its merits; its style will

be praised, its good taste will be perhaps discussed; those who will receive it with knowledge of its circumstances will have for it some indulgence, but for him who has but glanced at it, handled it, looked at it in haste, it will be comparable at the most to the grapes in the fable—not ripe enough—I tell you so!

So wags the world! However, before a work sets sail over the ocean of ages, to follow the consecrated image, it is not altogether unwise to ornament it, to deck it with flags, to mark the device of its author upon its prow beforehand, and so to enclose in this frail brigantine, according to custom, the plans and specifications of its construction, in order that in the end, if it withstand the calms or braves the foul weather, its civil status may be preserved, and by that its origin and its history in some degree be known.

*The Frenchwoman of the Century* is, so far as regards conception and execution, the resultant of an effort real and doubly meritorious, in this sense that the book has been written, combined, and executed almost against the grain, and against the wish of its creator. I may expose straightforwardly and furnish the reason of this peculiarity, since the fantastic monographist of the *Ornements de la Femme* has not judged me unworthy, although a pure hidalgo by birth, to set here some Small Talk of the Vanguard at the

head of these chapters of light erudition on the manners and dresses of the time.

My excellent friend Uzanne will not accuse me of treachery, if I deliver here, duty free, the confidences which he has been good enough to accord me in our private conversations, in those hours of melancholy and of sombre discouragement in which nothing exists any longer in appreciable sensation in the present, but everything accentuates itself in a radiant manner on the blue horizons of the future.

After the publication of the three volumes which form the charming collection of which this work is the complement, the author of *Son Altesse la Femme* dreamed of putting a term to these editions of rare curios which, furnished with all the charms of illustration, and literary and delicate as he was quite willing to allow them in a certain mean to be, gave no satisfaction to his aspirations of an original literary man and ardent littérateur, very much more in love himself with a beautiful style than with elegant "bibliophily."

In reality, I cannot blame the writer of these smart fantasies; the very fact of his being minutely careful about the decoration and the dress of his volumes must create for him a false situation, and one differently interpreted by Opinion, that giddy trifler who ordinarily catches her judgments with a flying line in the common-

place current of the *on dits*, above all the superficialities of matters and of men.

Books of the nature of these resemble very much those pretty women of the world of whom are everywhere vaunted—if they are not discussed—the toilets, the splendour, the jewels; but few persons desire to know and to penetrate their wit and their real qualities, every one preferring, rather than divulge them, to stifle their secret distinction and their refined delicacies under that eternal and horrible denomination: *the beautiful Madame X——*.

How many persons and things pass thus in our chatterbox and little penetrating society under the false gold cope of a borrowed reputation!

In this country of Latin and noble race the money-making author, we must say, is not alone considered, but the public spirit pleases itself more than anywhere else in classing, ticketing, and cataloguing, in innumerable subdivisions, all the producers and cultivators of thought.

A moral circle is traced somewhat too lightly, and after his first works, around every intellectual artist or artisan. It is desired to specialise the talent of one, to assign definitively a place to another. Here is a man who is penned up, or, better still, imprisoned in a sphere from which, it seems, all hope of issue is interdicted. Here is another who is exiled in his little domain without having permission to enlarge or to vary his perspectives. It is often very troublesome to appeal

against these summary and frequently ill-delivered decisions of opinion.

Now my intractable friend revolts like a young devil in a holy water-pot against all these baptisms with which people desire to inundate him specially. Will it be believed? The uniform epithets of erudite, bibliophilist, or bibliographist, which are conferred upon him from all quarters with justice, irritate him sometimes excessively. Inconstant by temperament as unstable, haughty even to madness, he makes a show of repudiating his past work, his loves of resurrection, his researches of literary history, his gallantries reported, and, above all, those gracious books in which he has joined better than any one artistic taste to delicacies of form and style. He dreams, unhappy man! in horror of this silly classification, of being unfaithful to the reputation which he already amply enjoys among a small number of the fastidious; he swears that he will live after the caprices of "his butterfly," and only create in future natural children, conceived across fields of fantasy in the hedge-schools and legitimate passions of his independent caprices.

He wishes to cull henceforth the red flowers of the ideal in the country of the imagination, to listen to the echo of his sentiments, the vibrations of his sensations, to nourish himself with the fruits of nature, to live, in a word, in the good

warm sun of thought, here and there, without shackles, without adopting any party or line of conduct, just as the wind may blow, and, above all, no more to restrict himself with such ardour to the trituration of engravings and of illuminations in the basement of his trade.



Bound by close and cordial sympathy, as well by the cult of books as by the connection of travels, how often have I not seen him promenading up and down and emitting curious monologues in my little library of Salmantica, swearing to abandon for a long season those reddish-brown and satin books which make gay the shop-windows of the booksellers, and, in fine, to cease to be the "agreeable author of the *Fan!*" Nothing equalled his bursts of passion relating to these enterprises agreed upon "by the job;" and it was all in vain for me to object to him, that he was free, that nothing constrained his talent or his character to conform itself to these things, that, on the other hand, he might make, under these elegant envelopes, as many beautiful works as it might please him to invent.

I added that *Son Altesse la Femme* was besides a book of an essentially original bearing, and worthy of the esteem of the true dainty lovers of the language; but all this availed not to stop his discontented humour; he said in a sombre fashion that one must not judge men hastily, that a man who thinks to make his life finds out one

day that he endures it; that for him the taste for books had insensibly conducted him to the composition, to the architecture even of the *bouquin*. and that caught in the gear of the artistic and interesting employment, he had felt himself little by little dragged further than he had desired. So with what almost childish joy he hailed now the approaching epoch in which he should return to pretty works, black or white, scarcely regarding small vignettes, gliding peacefully into the text like gondolas upon a lake!

All that I could obtain from this singular enemy of himself and others, from this umbrageous madman, from this seeker of the moon in mid-day, was that he should complete, before putting in operation his living evolution of literary mystic and dreamer, this collection directed to the feminine graces which remained singularly bandy-legged with its three volumes. I made him understand that he could not thus leave the game like a bad player, and that it was equitable to accord, so to speak, their revenge to the world of bibliophilists by reason of the non-perfection of the illustrations *aquarellées* of his last book.

I got his promise, under the condition, however, that I should present, in virtue of our old friendship, his letters of credit to that same public which he treated so unceremoniously scarcely a year ago in a preface of true Castilian style. And so I came, without power of withdrawing

myself, to prove afresh that there are no longer any Pyrenees by publishing familiarly here this too long certificate of the origin of *The Frenchwoman of the Century.*

Without doubt, the great historiographer of *L'Ombrelle* will give us in future romances, novels of a highly precious character and of excellent make; certainly I am certain the introducer of the *Poètes de Ruelles* will yet point his pen in physiologies, in portraits, in thoughts and in observations, in critical studies of a subtle science and of a penetrating art; but here I will invoke one of our old proverbs of Castille: "*Cada mosca tiene su sombra:* Every fly has its shadow." The bigger the wings of the fly will grow, the more distantly will their shadow project itself over the swarm of musquitoes and of midges, over the crowd of the envious and the cold-blooded reptiles.

Who knows if, later on, in the midst of successes less particular than those which have welcomed him up to this day, the philologist, the ex-courtier of *Son Altesse la Femme* will not have to regret, with a sweet sadness, his ancient enveloping passions, when, writer and artist by turns, he lived in the happy harmony of these two sensations of creatorship, in books young and original, which, whatever he may choose to say about them, will remain always in his honour?

Who knows if he will not have dropped the

substance for the shadow, and if he will be able to seize again the single hair of opportunity which at present he holds so fast? Man of whims, lover of the impossible, disdainful of conquests dearly obtained, he will not be long in remarking that the higher one rises the greater is one's isolation, the more one defines, the less one is generally understood; and that, in sum of all, these amiable works merited more complaisance and esteem than he has deigned to accord them.

❦

Of this I want no other example than this present book, *The Frenchwoman of the Century*, which I have just run through with the pleasure of a dilettante as an astonishing diorama of our manners and customs since the Revolution. It is indeed the history of the *bon ton* and the social eccentricities to be found in that period; a history infinitely varied on a theme which seems always the same, which shows the French spirit as futile, as ingenious, as disinterested as it will always present itself to the admiration of other peoples, like that spirit of the *enfant terrible* which even whilst it alarms disarms.

All these scintillating Parisian pictures, these minute descriptions of costume which follow one another from the year VIII. of the Republic up to the last year which has just passed away, this so successful evocation of so many vanished reigns under the eternal weathercock sceptre of Fashion, these diverse chapters, concise, judicially ordered,

without historic pretensions or moral or political considerations, these pages nourished of small documents, well chosen and melted together; all in this book is conceived and writ with a something, what it is I cannot say, which marks an evident personality.

My grumbling comrade, in whom pride, or the consciousness of his worth, creates this eccentric duality that he is always discontented with the work which he has just finished, and prodigiously inflated with that which he dreams of executing, defends himself from having written a book of any value. He protests against it, the brevity and the strangulation of the epochs described; he argues that the work must be considered as a hasty glance of the eye over the century which marches so hastily to its last hour; that he has done nothing but stitch together some notes on fashions and small facts consigned by divers contemporaries; that he has fastened together the whole as well as he could; that he insists on proclaiming that nothing is to be found here but a sort of summary of the work which is to be prepared in the future.

All this useless verbiage, what in the world does it matter to us who find his book pleasant, light, gracious, and gallantly presented; it remains in its proper mean and returns to its proper end. We certainly do not ask for a work of a somniferous nature, worthy of the academic palms, about the *Société française au XIX^e^ siècle;* what we want is a book frankly of the world, sown with

traits, with original views, filled with the rustling of fashions, with the tumble of manners, with all the echoes of elegant life which may be as a revolving mirror of customs, a coquettish collection which we may read as sage moralists, skimming all, dwelling on nought—album of the drawing-rooms or little monument of costume, eloquent image of our frivolity;—what do we want more?

Pretty rosy and tapering fingers will turn over those pages delicately; women's eyes, laughing and inconstant, will pilfer the text at haphazard; old and charming dowagers will read it attentively, moved on a sudden by the recollection of their Pamela hats or their first sleeves *à la folle;* around and about these living and picturesque chapters conversation will become animated, the ashes of the past will be stirred once more. How much love and how many nervous sensations have no few of our women of the world now in their decline left folded in a canezou of book-muslin or a barège skirt!

Such as it presents itself in the polychromatic harmony of its delicate decoration, this beautiful work will traverse centuries and brave more surely posterity—even as a literary composition—than all the heavy encyclopædias, and the majority, above all, of the realistic romances of this time, of which the vogue is already passing away.

This poor Uzanne must take philosophically his part of the success which will certainly welcome this last production which he reproves. I,

since he exacts it, must write here his P.P.C. ; but I have a feeling that his absence will not be of long duration, and that a light repose will be sufficient to bring calm again to his spirits in a very little while.

It will be for the friends of pretty publications to bring back this fugitive who smiles sceptically at this conclusion which he watches me write ; but even though he now refuses to allow it, let us hope that after the publication of the singular books which he has in incubation, to be served to us in small shape, he is yet reserving for us in the future some beautiful and estimable illustrated composition as coquettish and as smart as *The Frenchwoman of the Century.*

D. SÉBASTIAN SANCHEZ Y GUSMAN.

TOLEDO, *October* 10, 1885.

# NYMPHS AND MERVEILLEUSES.

## *NYMPHS AND MERVEILLEUSES.*

ALLOW it, for it is the truth; our nineteenth century awakes, is born on the morrow of the 9 Thermidor. Under the Directory, which was, it was wittily said, as the Regency of the Revolution, French society reforms itself in oblivion of the past, carelessness of the future, and the most utter epicurism of the present. Logically, we may say that the frontier of the eighteenth century is cleared, and that a new era commences with all the transformations of manners, language, and customs which mark the normal evolution of France towards a new régime. The public spirit was reposing after the terrible nightmare of the

Terror, and one might believe for a moment in the intoxication of that sudden lull, in a complete popular appeasement, in a serious political reparation and a true civil renovation.

Mercier, who then was writing a new *Tableau de Paris*, declares that all is changed. "Luxury comes out more brilliant than ever from the smoking ruins, the culture of arts takes again all its lustre; literature, too, whatever one may say, suffered but a passing eclipse. . . . Shows have taken to them again their pomp, and the fashions are again the chief object of idolatry.

"From all parts of the social body," he continues, "new opulent men have been seen to emerge, and with them gold and riches: so that at the first glance it might be said that the great evils were repaired; but it is not so.

"Paris being a town essentially commercial, essentially skilled, essentially composed of taverns, it might be believed that for her the misfortune which is no longer has never been.

"A brilliant surface disguises the plaints and veils the murmurs. Luxury is like a spirituous liquor which entirely intoxicates the spirits; and I know not what mobility in opinion makes every one attach himself, for his part, to a sort of epicurism which lets the world slide on, thinking only of the present moment.

"The present moment," says Mercier at the conclusion of his preface, "already makes an

astonishing and perfect contrast with that of servitude, of terror, of disruption of families, of tears and of blood.

"If all the disastrous circumstances are not forgotten in the midst of our feasts and our pleasures, they are covered with a curtain which one fears to raise, or rarely raises."[1]

No contemporary judgment is more exact or more clear than this. The citizen Mercier sums up in it in a marvellous manner the state of men's spirits in the first days of the Directory. The most perfect anarchy succeeded the "National Razor;" the Revolution had destroyed all, even the empire of women; the clubs, the assemblies of the street had caused to disappear even the last traces of the assembly rooms; all French spirit, grace and finesse seemed to have been submerged in the bloody deliriums of the crowd. The reaction of Thermidor had to create, to institute everything new; it had also the honour to efface the last monstrous recollections of the Terror.

So it is not astonishing to see everywhere the resurrection of pleasure, games and joy, after so long constraint; confusion is in all places; one feels that one lives in a moral interregnum: folly, forgetfulness, drunkenness, abandonment of oneself with facility and without regard for the means,

[1] *Paris pendant la Révolution.* Preamble of 10 frimaire, an VII.

is the order of the day. Woman, above all, knows that she has regained her most charming rights. Nothing had revolted her more, as the citizen Thérémin[1] remarks, than that absurd attempt of the Revolution which was for introducing into our manners the severity or the ferocity of the social laws of the first Romans. Terrified by that austerity calling itself republican, our Frenchwomen strove to give birth to a corruption greater even than that under the monarchy; to reassure us for ever against those false Spartan rigours; they wished only to please, and their seductive power was more mighty than any amount of rigid decrees, than the majority of the measures taken in order to establish virtue and morality.

The creation of the Directory replaced woman on the mythologic throne of the Graces and the Loves, made her the mad queen of a society, panting, feverish, agitated, resembling a fair open to all appetites, to all low passions, to stock-jobbing, to loves by auction, to every kind of trade which excluded sentiment. "Look into the drawing-rooms," write the MM. de Goncourt;[2] "glance over the street: the public promenades, the public balls, these are the drawing-rooms of the Directory, drawing-rooms of equality, with

[1] Thérémin, *De la condition des femmes*, an VII.

[2] E. and J. de Goncourt, *Société française pendant le Directoire*, ch. iv.

wide open folding doors for every one that comes, for every one that can pay. Pleasure was nothing but a small family feast: it is now a brotherly repast! no more caste! no more rank! All the world amuses itself together and in the open air! society is only at home when not at home! The young girl dances with the first comer; actresses and wives of directors, spouses and courtesans elbow and cross one another! . . . noise, movement, meetings! It is delicious, it is incredible."

But the art of living, the art of pleasing, the exquisite politeness, that happy mixture of regard and deference, of anticipation and delicacy, of confidence and respect, of ease and modesty, as it is phrased in the *Letters of a Mameluke?* Politeness? it is no longer aught but a prejudice: young men address women with their hats on; does an old man anticipate their requests, the young men ridicule the worthy fellow. You pick up a woman's fan, she has no word of thanks; you salute her, she returns not your salute. She passes on, ogling the fine youngsters, laughing in the face of the deformed. The woman of the Directory seems to have materialised her spirit and "animalised" her heart; no more sentimentalism, scented and delicate gallantries, but in every meeting direct exchanges of proposals which bring about hasty couplings. It is no longer the forbidden fruit in this paradise of paganism; all the tactics of love consist in pro-

voking desire and satisfying it as quickly as possible. One conjugates the verb after the caprice of the moment: *I want you, you want me, we want each other*, never passing on to the impersonal, preferring to arrive at once at the imperfect or the past definite. Divorce is there to untie the bonds of those tortured by jealousy, but the cynicism of the time has made these delicacies rare. Marriage is no more considered, save as, according to the terrible expression of Cambacérès in the Code, "Nature in action;" that civil act is held but temporary, incompatibility of humour unbinding those whom physical agreements had united.

"From husband to husband" say, strangely enough, the historians of the Directory, "the woman wanders, pursuing her happiness, unbinding and rebinding her girdle. She circulates as a pretty piece of merchandise; she is spouse so long as she is not tired of it; she is mother while it amuses her. . . . The husband runs from the arms of one to the arms of another, demanding a concubine in a wife, and the satisfaction of his appetite in continual marriages. Divorce occurs for a mere nothing . . . marriage is its prelude; the husband has no jealousy of the past, the wife has no shame. It seems that the marriages of that time took their model in a stud where a trial is allowed."

## II.

According to the author of the *Souvenirs thermidoriens*,[1] the dancing reaction was sudden, impetuous, formidable, on the morrow of the deliverance. Scarcely were the scaffolds thrown down—the cesspool of the Barrière du Trône still exhaled the fetid odour of the blood shed there—when balls began to be organised in all points of the capital: the joyous tones of the clarionet, the violin, the tambourine, the flute, called together to the pleasures of the dance the survivors of the Terror, who flocked thither in crowds. Duval, in his *Souvenirs*, enumerates plentifully these different temples of Terpsichore:—"Here is first the magnificent garden of the Farmer-General Boutin, executed with all his colleagues *for having mixed water with the state tobacco*, which the proprietors baptized with the Italian name of Tivoli. This was the first which opened its gates to the public. Another ball was established in the Jardin Marbeuf, at the end of the avenue of the Champs-Élysées. Gay dances were the rule in these

[1] *Souvenirs thermidoriens.* By Georges Duval, author of the *Souvenirs de la Terreur.* Paris: Victor Magen, 1844, tom. ii. chap. xiv. Duval, in the course of this chapter, gives about the balls of Paris during the Directory very curious details not to be found elsewhere. We have borrowed many characteristic notes from these descriptions, which are those of an eye-witness.

two places, and none dreamed that the ashes of those who had created these enchanting gardens, and been afterwards reaped by the revolutionary sickle, were yet hardly cold."

Other balls were opened in succession: the ball at the Élysée National, once upon a time Bourbon, of which the negro Julien directed the orchestra with rare happiness, the Musard of his time; delicious boating excursions were here the rage; the Ball of the Jardin des Capucines, frequented by the milliners of the Rue Saint-Honoré and the Rue Neuve-des-Petits-Champs; the Ranelagh of the Bois de Boulogne, abandoned at that time to the clerks of pettifogging lawyers and tradesmen; the Wauxhall, where the skilful feats of the juggler Wal made the grisettes of the Marais and the Quartier du Temple flock together; all these balls were open on the quintidi and the décadi to the middle classes. Frascati and the Pavillon de Hanovre were the rendezvous of the high classes of society. In the city there was the Bal de la Veillée, where marvellous *caterwauling concerts* were given. Some twenty cats, of which one saw the heads only, were disposed on the keys of a harpsichord: these keys were pointed blades, every one of which struck the tail of a cat who emitted a cry, every cry answered to a musical note, and the whole produced an admirable charivari. This Bal de la Veillée became afterwards the famous Prado, dear to students.

On the left bank of the Seine one met with the Ball of the Rue Théouville, formerly Dauphine; then opposite the north gate of the Church of Saint Sulpice, at the entrance of the Rue Servandoni, one saw, balancing itself gracefully in the air, softly moving to and fro, a transparent rose, bearing the inscription, *Bal des zéphirs.* This ball, where the flute bore sway, had been established in the ancient cemetery of Saint Sulpice; this legend was still to be traced on the ground, *Hic requiescant, beatam spem expectantes.* The tumulary stones were not even removed from the interior of this place of pleasure; but the dancing youth cared little about profaning the ashes of the dead, and madness shone with all its lustre in that necropolis. Rue d'Assas, near the ancient convent of the Carmes Déchaux, in the very cemetery of the priory, was another carmagnole: the *Bal des Tilleuls* was opened there. The corybants of the Dance of Death came thither in crowds.

The dancing epidemic increased from day to day. After the decree, carried on the proposition of Boissy d'Anglas, which restored to the heirs of the condemned their confiscated property, joy returned to the camp of the disinherited, who passed thus suddenly in a few days from misery to opulence. These young people, astounded by the return of fortune, rushed into all the pleasures of their age; they founded an aristocratic ball for

themselves alone, and decided to admit only those who could boast of a father, mother, a brother or sister, or uncle at the least, immolated on the Place de la Revolution, or at the Barrière du Trône. Such was the origin of the famous *Ball of the Victims* (*Hôtel Richelieu*), which possessed a ceremonial of its own, and introduced veritable innovations into the eccentricities of fashion.

On entering the ball, one saluted *à la victime* with a quick movement of the head, imitating that of the condemned at the moment when the executioner, poising him on the plank, passed his head into the fatal crescent. There was an enormous affectation of grace in this salute which every one studied at his best; some young heroes of quadrille introduced into it an elegance which caused them to be received by the feminine Areopagus with marked favour. Every cavalier invited and reconducted his partner with a salute *à la victime;* nay, to accentuate this infamous comedy, some of the most refined elegance bethought themselves of having their hair shaven on the nape of their neck, after the same fashion as that in which Samson served those who had been condemned by the revolutionary tribunal. This ingenious invention caused transports of admiration in the camp of this extravagant youth. The ladies followed the fashion, and resolutely had their hair cut off at the roots. Such was the birth of the *coiffure à la victime*, which was to extend

through all France and be called subsequently *coiffure à la Titus*, or *à la Caracalla*. To complete this heartrending buffoonery, the daughters of those who had suffered adopted the red shawl in remembrance of the shawl which the executioner had cast over the shoulders of Charlotte Corday and the ladies Sainte-Amarante before mounting the scaffold.

This *Ball of the Victims*, in consequence of its madnesses and its high society, became very soon an object of ambition for happy Paris; people went there to see the fashions of the day, for the young girls who came thither in the evening to dance the new waltzes, rivalled one another in their toilets and their graces . . . ; little by little they quitted their mourning and boldly hoisted satin, velvet, and cashmeres of the warmest tones. It was at these insolent reunions that the first Lacedemonian tunics appeared, and the *chlamydes* with meandering colours, the fine calico shirt, the robes of gauze or of lawn, and the buskin with its charming interlacings of ribbons on the instep; all the fancies, Greek and Roman, which we shall hereafter describe, were inaugurated, for the most part, by the descendants of the guillotined. A few amiable arch-shorn ladies carried their love of realism and horror so far as to fasten round their neck a small red collar, which imitated most ravishingly the section of the chopper. The Incredibles swore in their

affected style, *by their little word of honour striped*, that it was divine, admirable, flowing with unheardofness.

In the intervals of the quadrilles, ices, punch, sherbets were swallowed down, partners' hands were taken, and declarations of love were received; nay, if we may believe an eye-witness, the author of the *Souvenirs thermidoriens*, "they ended by agreeing among themselves that after all Robespierre was not so black as he was painted, and that *the Revolution had its good side.*" [1]

Nothing was wanting to these madmen but to sing, in imitation of the beautiful Cabarus, the couplet of a satirical song then half-celebrated among the Directors:

> Robespierre returns; how fain
> Would we to dance our dears be calling!
> The Terror will be born again,
> And we shall see the heads afalling!
> But no! though hearts with longing yearn,
> Robespierre will not return!

Beside the Ball of the Victims all Paris paid the piper; it was a general whirl; one capered by subscription at the *Bal de Calypso*, Faubourg Montmartre, at the Hôtel d'Aligre and the Hôtel Biron, at the Lycée of the Bibliophilists

[1] Ripault, in *Une journée de Paris*, an V., also shows us an eye-witness, who is Polichinelle, at the Ball of the Victims: "I saw a fine young man, who said to me, 'Ah! Polichinelle . . . they have killed my father!—They have killed your father?'—and I took my handkerchief from my pocket—and he began to dance."

and Novelists, Rue de Verneuil; in the Rue de l'Échiquier at the florist Wenzell's; in every street of the city. Good society came by preference to the Hôtel Longueville, where the fair Madame Hamelin disdained not to show her nonchalant graces. "In these sumptuous saloons," write MM. de Goncourt, "the bow of Hulin commands, and a whole world undulates to prolonged accompaniments of bodies which syncopate two measures. Three hundred women, perfumed and floating in their déshabillés as Venus, allowing people to see all that is not shown, immodest:" fine leg, roguish foot, elegant bust, wandering hand, bosom of Armida, form of Callipyge, "in the arms of vigorous dancers turn, turn and turn again, knotted to their Adonises, who extend an unwearied thigh, marked out by supple nankeen. Under the cornices of gold a thousand mirrors repeat the smiles and interlacings, the swept garments moulding the body, the breasts of marble, and the mouths which, in the whirlwind of intoxication, open and blossom like roses."

All these classes of society are galvanised by the dancing mania; there is twirling even in the miserable garrets of the Faubourgs; many *bals champêtres* were arranged in the caverns of restaurant-keepers, in the underground floors of tradesmen.

## III.

Never did the French nation offer to the eyes of the observer a spectacle more strange, more incoherent, more varied, more inconceivable, than that which it presented at the beginning of the Directory. The Revolution had submerged everything—traditions, morals, language, throne, altar, fashions and manners; but the specific lightness of the people swam on the top of all these ruins; the spirit of carelessness, of romancing, of pertinency, that never-dying spirit, grumbling and laughing, precious foundation of the national character, reappeared on the morrow of the storm more alert, more vivacious, more indomitable than ever. As nothing remained of the past, and as it was impossible to improvise in a day a society with its harmonies, its usages, its garments entirely unedited, they borrowed the whole from ancient history and nations which have disappeared. Everybody muffled himself, played the part of old lady or gentleman, all took the disguise they liked; it was a general travesty, an unlimited carnival, an orgie without end and without reason. One cannot regard, at the present day, this epoch as a whole, and in the minute details of its working, without believing in an immense mystification, a colossal caricature composed by some humorist

of the school of Hogarth or Rowlandson. Still, in despite of these Parisian follies, our armies of Sambre-et-Meuse, of the Rhine and of the Moselle, as well as our glorious battalions of Italy, carried wide the renown of our arms and the germs of liberty; the whole world re-echoed our victories; the prodigies of Bonaparte disquieted old Europe, and one might have thought that so much glory was capable of giving at once pride and wisdom to the dancing jacks which had made of Paris a dazzling puppet-show impossible to describe! Nothing of the kind.

We can scarcely believe that, in the midst of the victories of Ney, of Championnet, and of the General Bonaparte, no enthusiasm was perceptible in the capital, on our boulevards and public places not a single movement of joy. If we may credit the contemporary journals, people passed coldly, with the most complete indifference, beside the criers who announced the greatest successes of our generals; it was peace that was desired, tranquillity, abundance. Stockjobbing had gained all classes; the drunkenness of the masquerade annihilated noble ideas in every brain. The *Écrouelleux*, the *Inconcevables*, the *Merveilleux*, with their chins hidden in their inordinate cravats, cursed the Government of the Directors, misunderstood the merits of our soldiers, saying, with their fastidious air, *On the word of a victim, this cannot last!* The *fêtes* even, given by the Direc-

tory to render homage to the valour of our brave men, were sometimes without dignity and true grandeur; bad taste was flagrant, and the comedism of these ceremonies did not exclude ridicule. When Junot came to the Government with the colours taken at the battle of La Favorite, he was received, like Murat, with grand preparations; but the aide-de-camp Lavallette, in a letter to an intimate friend, relates with what pomp more modest receptions were usually managed. "I have seen," he wrote, "in the apartments of the petit Luxembourg, our five kings, clad in a mantle of Francis I., bedizened with lace, and wearing on their heads a hat of Henri IV. The figure of La Revellière-Lépeaux looked like a cork fixed on a couple of pins; M. de Talleyrand, in silk pantaloons of the colour of wine dregs, seated on a folding-chair at the feet of Barras, presented gravely to his sovereigns an ambassador of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, whilst the General Bonaparte was eating his master's dinner. On the right, upon a dais, were fifty musicians and singers of the opera, Lainé, Lays and the actresses, singing a patriotic cantata to the music of Méhul; on the left, upon another dais, two hundred women, with the beauty of youth, freshness and nudity, going into ecstasies over the happiness and majesty of the Republic; all dressed in muslin tunics and silk tights, after the fashion of opera dancers; the majority of them with rings

on their great toes. On the morrow of this fair festival thousands of families were proscribed in their heads, forty-eight departments were widowed of their representatives, and thirty journalists went to die at Sinnamary on the borders of the Ohio!"[1]

Besides the *fêtes* dedicated to victory, the Government of the Directors had, after ancient usage, instituted public festivals at fixed dates, in honour of the Republic and of its foundation; others were consecrated to the Fatherland, to Virtue, to Youth; there was even the *Festival of Spouses*, a strange idea in a time when divorce was the rage, and when one would never have dreamed of raising the smallest shrine to Fidelity and still less to Constancy.

The Luxembourg, of which the five Directors had taken possession, had become, as the poet Arnault remarks,[2] a veritable Court; and as that court was very accessible to women, thanks to the voluptuous Barras, these had brought their sweetest manners. Gallantry had caused to disappear, little by little, the Republican austerities, and women were recovering in a great measure the empire of which they had been dispossessed

[1] *Decree of the Executive Directory*, Paris, 18 fructidor an V., which ordered the arrest of thirty-two directors of journals, who were for the most part transported to French Guiana. See *Voyage à Cayenne et chez les anthropophages*, by Louis Ange-Pitou, Paris, an XIII. (1805).

[2] *Souvenirs d'un sexagénaire*, 4 vols. 8vo, 1833.

during the long reign of the Convention. The citizenesses de Staël, Hamelin, de Château-Régnault, Bonaparte and Tallien were the queens of Paris, and there were no festivals without them. The daughter of the Count de Cabarrus, the ex-spouse of Monsieur de Fontenay, the future wife of the Count de Caraman-Chimay, the beautiful Madame Tallien, in a word, seemed above all the uncontested sovereign of the Directory, and there might have been attached to the hem of her Roman costume that satirical label, *Respect to the national proprieties.* A witty remark was told at this time which circulated for a long while in that frivolous society: a dandy had attached himself to the steps of the great citizeness, and as she languidly turned towards him, "Your reason, sir, for regarding me?" "I regard not you, Madame," the wag replied, "I am examining the crown diamonds."[1]

"This woman," write the portrait-painters of the Directory[2] with too much enthusiasm, "is the fairy of the Luxembourg. She adorns its ceremonies with her smile. She organises its parties and its galas. She changes, metamorphosis herself to restore their youth to its *fêtes* and give them a new attraction. Sometimes it is Calypso receiving the friends of Tallien in her cottage of Cours-la-Reine, and promenading them under the

[1] *Petite poste.* Nivôse an V.

[2] *La société française sous le Directoire*, chap. x.

canopies of verdure interlaced with emblems, among the trees, as the nymph of the god; at the Palais de Suresnes she is a countrywoman of Frascati, a goddess disguised who betrays herself in her walk! As a light sceptre, with which her fingers trifle, she holds in her hand the superintendence of taste, and by her the pianofortes of the civil list, of which the melodies had been allowed to slumber, are distributed to the fair hands worthy of awaking them. Through her the directorial mansion is filled with collections of music of Marie-Antoinette, Madame Victoire, Madame Élisabethet, Madame de Bombelles. She is among the five kings obeyed like a Grace who rules after her slightest will; her example is authority for the detail and decoration of their interiors; does she doat on porcelain of Sèvres, ministers and directors at once have a tea-service upon their tables.

"Who does not applaud her in all which she commands and all which she dares," continue the brilliant painters of that society, "who does not applaud her in her singing, who does not applaud her in her dancing, that Sempronia who reposes the tired eyes of Catilina, and conspires only for amusement? All her spirit has been turned towards pleasure, and the harp, the triumph of her beautiful arms! and the southern tongues, music of the voice! she knows all that enchains the looks and the ears. . . . Her face is

embellished with a charm which is found in none other. Circé! who in the time of the scaffolds and red bonnets obliged the executioners to powder themselves with the powder of clove-gillyflower, and who to-day, in the *cortège* of shirt frill and breeches, with rosettes of Fréron and his golden youth, leads, smiling, the choir of the scandals of France."

One may add to this radiant portrait that the *ci-devant* Madame de Fontenay showed always before all the disinherited an inexhaustible charity, a thing which caused it to be said with reason that if the citizeness Bonaparte had acquired the surname of Notre-Dame des Victoires, the charming Tallien merited in every way that of Notre-Dame de Bon Secours.

The most striking drawing-room of the Luxembourg, that where the best company used to meet, was incontestably that of Barras. He was simple and full of *bonhomie;* there was little conversation with that spirit of talk of former days, but there was laughter, play, and unrestrained pleasantry. Monsieur de Talleyrand sat there complacently at a table of *bouillotte.* Madame de Staël came thither to whisper with Marie-Joseph Chénier, or François de Neufchâteau. The other Directors received each one day of the decade, but their receptions were not striking. At La Revellière-Lépeaux's—Laide peau, as he was nicknamed — the vulgariser of *théophilan-*

*thropie*, nothing was talked of but the new religion, and one's "vices were put to the torture." At Carnot's, who gave miserable *soirées* in a swell room with a low ceiling, a few warlike *ariettes* were sung, and the only oath was by the "Evangel of the gendarmerie." At Letourneur's and Rewbell's it was still worse: there was no talk, nothing but yawns. But all France was not at Paris; it was represented above all at the Palais Serbelloni in Milan, and at the Château de Montebello, where a brilliant court was eager to render homage to the seductive Josephine, who by her grace made no fewer conquests than her illustrious spouse by his genius.

## IV.

The true drawing-room of the Directory is the street, the Petit Coblentz, Tivoli with its forty acres of verdure, Monceaux, Idalie, Biron, the Élysée; it is, in fine, the Butte Montmartre, whence every evening at night soar ten artificial fires, which shake over Paris their sheaves of jewels, their spangles of gold and emeralds. The street is the eternal holiday, along which defile every night on their way to Feydeau and other spectacles the elegant bands of stockbrokers and contractors in the company of their mad mistresses. In summer, pleasure is to be found under the foliage at Bagatelle, at the Jardin de Virginie, Faubourg du Roule, at the late Hôtel Beaujon; the *aimables*

and the Merveilleux dote on these turfy spots, full of streams, cascades, grottoes, turrets, lit with red flames, filled with the noise of trumpets, where half-naked nymphs fly not under the willows. The grand attraction is, above all, the ancient garden of Boutin; it is Tivoli, medley of slopes, miniature waterfalls, sinuous paths, where one passed in the midst of a hedge of pretty women, where all the games known to Cythera were enjoyed. In this country of Astræa, enlivened by the pyrotechnic fancies of the Ruggieri, by caperings, by light songs, by fair-shows, by acrobats of every kind, the society of the Directory found itself in the midst of its carnival.

"Burning pleasures," wrote Mercier, "women are in their element in the midst of your tumult! Content pierces through their demeanour in spite of their terrible railing against the present time; never have they enjoyed such license among any people; the rudeness even of the Jacobins expires before the ladies without a cockade. They have danced, drunk, eaten; they have deceived three or four adorers of opposite sects with an ease and frankness which would make us believe that our century has no more need of the slightest shade of hypocrisy and dissimulation, and that it is beneath us to palliate our habits and our tastes whatever they may be.

"What noise is that we hear? Who is this woman preceded by applause? Come and see.

The crowd presses round her. Is she naked? I am in doubt. Come still nearer; this deserves my pencil. I see her light pantaloons, comparable to the famous skin breeches of Mgr. le Comte d'Artois, whom four great lackeys raised in air to let fall into his vestment, so that there should be no crease. Clothed in this box all day, it became necessary to unbreech him in the evening by raising him in the same manner and with still greater efforts. The feminine pantaloons, I say, exceedingly tight although of silk, surpass perhaps the famous breeches by their complete closeness; they are trimmed with a sort of bracelets. The jacket is cut sloping in the most skilful fashion, and under a gauze, artistically painted, palpitate the reservoirs of maternity. A chemise of fine lawn allows the legs and thighs to be seen, which are embraced by circles of gold and diamonds. A crowd of young people environ her with the language of a dissolute joy. Another daring feat of *Merveilleuse*, and we might see among us the antique dances of the daughters of Laconia; there remains so little to let fall that I know not if true modesty would not be a gainer by the removal of that transparent veil. The flesh-coloured pantaloons, applied straitly to the skin, excite the imagination and allow to be seen only at the best the most hidden forms and allurements; . . . and these are the fine days which follow those of Robespierre!"

In the autumn, concerts, teas, theatres attracted the same affluence of transparent robes and muffled chins; there is dancing and taking of ices at Garchy's and Velloni's; the Pavillon de Hanovre is all the rage: in this part of the ancient Hôtel de Richelieu, goddesses crowned with roses, perfumed with essences, floating in their robes *à l'athénienne*, ogle the *incroyables*, play with their fans, pass to and fro in a whirlwind, laughing, tumbled, seductive, with loud words and insolent eyes, seeking the male. In the assembly of the men everybody is yelping, and revealing the secrets of the Government. "All these women you see here," says a young Spartiatus to his neighbour... "Well?" "They are kept by the deputies." "Indeed!" "This girl, with dancing eyes and elegant shape, is the mistress of Raffron, he who proclaims the cockade to be the fairest ornament of a citizen. This young lady, with her bosom naked, but elsewhere covered with diamonds, is the sister of Guyomard; his last motion was paid with the crown diamonds. That flaring blonde you see in the distance, is the youngest daughter of Esnard, who has put aside a hundred thousand crowns for her portion; she is to be married to-morrow. There is not," concludes the young man, "a single member of the legislative body who has not here two or three women, every one of whose dresses costs the Republic a portion of its domains."

Thus the talk intermingles, talk of gallantry, of merchandise, of politics, of stockjobbing, quips and puns. All opinions, all castes, found themselves united in these *subscription societies*, where one hailed M. de Trénis, the Vestris of the rooms. Women of the higher class, who feared to display luxury and attract attention in receiving habitually at their own homes, had no hesitation about mixing with the gallant nymphs who frequented even Thélusson and the Hôtel de Richelieu. People went there in full dress, but, *by instinct*, they preferred undress. Thélusson, Frascati, the Pavillon de Hanovre, were composed *very nearly* of the best society of Paris, according to Madame d'Abrantès.[1] They went there in a mass after leaving the opera or any other spectacle—sometimes five-and-twenty of the same society; old acquaintances were met there, afterwards they returned late to take a cup of *tea* . . . a tea containing everything from stewed fowl to peas and champagne.

The women of the Directory, however, had none of the delicacies and the languid graces which constituted afterwards what was called distinction. Nearly all of them were bouncing girls, manlike, plain-speaking, of a carnation verging on the purple, of overflowing *embonpoint*, of *tuckers* suited to gross appetites, of gluttonous

[1] *Histoire des salons de Paris*, par la duchesse d'Abrantès, 1838, t. iii.

greediness ruled by their senses, however they affected sudden faintings or megrims which they never knew. The time to see them was after the concert, falling upon their supper, devouring immense mouthfuls of turkey, cold partridges, truffles and *pâtés* of anchovies, drinking wines and liqueurs. Eating, in one word, according to a pamphleteer, for the fundholder, for the soldier, for the clerk, for every *employé* of the Republic. Were they not bound to make a "strong box" to resist the inflammations of the lungs which laid wait for them at their departure? The winter blast soon got the better of a robe of lawn or a roguish tunic *au lever de l'aurore.*

## V.

The Merveilleuse and the Nymph are, indeed, the typical creatures of this epoch of profound corruption and open libertinage, in which all minors emancipated themselves, and which proclaimed the *Sacrament of Adultery.* Merveilleuses and Nymphs were the divinities recognised at the *décadis* and all the pagan festivals of the Republic; plastic beauties, priestesses of nudity and the god of the gardens, women doating on their body from which the soul had deserted, lost in a false mythology which induced them to *Grécise* for love of the antique until they were

able to compare themselves to the Venuses of statuary and the heroines of Fable.

The young men of fashion were their worthy partners. Listen to a contemporary who shall sketch their portrait in a few lines: "Presumptuous more than youth ordinarily is; ignorant, since for six or seven years education had been interrupted, following up gallantry with license and debauch, picking quarrels more than would be allowed to men living continually in bivouac, inventors of a jargon almost as ridiculous as their immense cravat, which seemed half a piece of muslin wound about them, and, above all, stupid and impertinent. At war with the royalist party of the Club de Clichy, they adopted a costume which differed at all points from that of the young aristocrats: a very small waistcoat, a coat with two large swallow-tail flaps, pantaloons of which I could have made a dress, small boots *à la Souvarow*, a cravat in which they were buried. Add to this toilet a little cane in the shape of a club, about as long as half your arm, a spying-glass as big as a saucer, hair frizzled in little snakes which hid their eyes and half their face, and you will have an idea of an *incroyable* of this epoch."

For the *Merveilleuses*, let us look at them at the date of the year V., when were re-established New Year's Day presents, and that promenade de Longchamps, of which the defile was nothing

but a contest of luxury and beauty, and an incredible rivalry of dress. We shall be able to trace them thus, through the *éphémérides* of fashion, up to the last years of the century.

Nothing less French than the attire of fashionable women at this commencement of the year V. It is nothing, according to the messengers[1] of fashions, but Greek tunics, Greek buskins, Turkish dolmans, Swiss caps—all speak of travellers disposed to travel. That which ought not to surprise us less, after the *Titus*, the head-dresses *à la victime* and *a l'hérissé*, is the blind preference accorded to wigs. Formerly, at the mere name, a fair one would shudder; but the sacrifice of one's hair in that republican year had become a triumph . . .; with that, dress tucked up as far as the calf: this easy style, in accord with flat shoes, gave to women a decided and masculine walk little in harmony with their sex.

On their coiffures was set a coquettish biggin, like enough to the caps of infancy, or else a spencer hat with high crown fluted with vultures' feathers. The same year witnessed the birth of caps gathered in folds, the child's cap trimmed with lace, sometimes of lawn, sometimes of velvet, black, cherry, violet, or deep green, with a flat edging over the seams, and gathered lace about the rim. Even the turban was worn

[1] *Variations des costumes français* at the end of the eighteenth century.

with a flat crown adorned with pearls, and with an aigrette, brought into fashion by the arrival of a Turkish ambassador in Paris; then, too, there was the English hood trimmed with crape, the bonnet *à la jardinière*, the hat *casque-ballon*, the bonnet *à la folle*, trimmed with many-coloured fichus, blondes and laces, half hiding the face; the mob-cap in lawn gauze, the white hat *à la Lisbeth*, over a cherry cap which the Saint-Aubin had brought into vogue in the opera of *Lisbeth* at the Théâtre-Italien; the *chapeau à la primerose*, also borrowed from the piece of that name, the *casque à la Minerve*, the turban in spirals, and twenty other head-coverings, each more gracious than the other, which, however extravagant they were, marvellously suited all the pert and provoking faces.

The fichu was indifferently worn as undress, draped, or crumpled at hazard; no rule determined its form, taste alone presided at its confection, and it was, indeed, the most adorable coiffure in the world, the most roguish: no chignon, a few hairs scattered over the forehead, a drapery amply *bouillonnée*, a black band, and attention to manage the three points, that is all that usage generalised. We ought to have seen the grisettes in their morning undress. An engraving presents us with a Parisienne in this dress of the first hour; the first white fichu at hand serves her for a coif, her hair wanders at random, and the chignon

remains invisible; white close-fitting jacket, and striped petticoat, low at the corners, slippers of green morocco: thus attired, the fair one went to seek provisions at the nearest market; no basket, but a white handkerchief to hold eggs, flowers and fruit. With this mighty bargain you see her returning delighted, holding in one hand the little parcel, and with the other her petticoat, raised very high, as far as the knee, to allow the white chemise to be seen and the calf well placed, enclosed in an immaculate network.

For the morning promenade, the Parisian beauties, in order the better to receive the caresses of Zephyr, did away with all superfluous ornament; a slight robe delineates the shape, a shawl of yellow lawn, citron, or pale rose, took the place of the fichu; on the head a simple biggin, the lace of which escapes under a gauze adorned with spangles; on the feet small red buskins, where ribbons of the same colour roll round the leg. Such was the costume in which the graces assisted, somewhat late in the day, at the sunrise.

By day nothing was to be seen but chemises *à la prêtresse*, robes of lawn cut in the ancient fashion, robes *à la Diane, à la Minerve, à la Galatée, à la Vestale, à l'Omphale*, leaving the arms naked and marking the shape like moist draperies; so to all the women of the Directory this couplet of the *Conseils à Fanny*, by the Prêvot d'Irai, might be applied:

To rouse the love you'd have us feel,
You choose light stuffs which nought conceal;
The very finest gauze you take
Our sense of pleasure to awake.
Believe me, what we fail to spy
Inspires still more of ecstasy;
To hide your charms below, above,
Is your true skill to heighten love.

Costumes which revealed the shape, and were transparent, were desired. The doctors did their best to declare, in a thousand ways, that the climate of France, temperate as it may be, admitted not the lightness of costume of ancient Greece. No attention was paid to the counsels of Hippocrates, and Delessart could affirm, at the end of the year VI., that he had seen more young girls die in consequence of the system of gauzed nudities than in the forty years previous.

Some audacious ones, among them the fair Madame Hamelin, ventured to promenade entirely naked in a sheath of gauze; others showed their breasts uncovered, but their immodest attempts were not renewed. The popular good sense made them abortive from the first, and the extravagant women, who had no feeling of their immodesty, were made at least conscious of their impudence when hootings and apostrophes pursued them home.

The fashion of transparencies, however, became modified by degrees: all quickly changes in the

feminine empire. Towards the month of Brumaire, in the year VII., robes *à l'Égyptienne*, turbans and spencers *à l'Algérienne*, *Fichus au Nil*, and bonnets *en crocodile* occupied awhile the spirit of our frivolous ladies. The country of Egypt brought into fashion enormous many-coloured turbans, worn on one side, with reflexed plumes, of which the foundation was of a plain colour opposed to the toque; the réticule, or ridicule, came again into favour under a military form; it was varied infinitely, and devices, emblems, arabesques, cameos, cyphers, ornamented it in turn.

The hair was disarranged with the hand *à la Titus* or *à la Caracalla;* jockey caps were worn, courier caps, hunting caps trimmed with corn, poppy, velvet; the *balloon* cap and the casque had a great success. The multiplicity of fashions which rivalled, crossed, succeeded one another "with the rapidity of lightning," at last confused and frighted even the directors of the appointed journals.

Shawls above all were a theme for the chronicler; they were worn crosswise, amply draped over the shoulder and brought over the arm, the ends floating in the wind. Refinement introduced the liveliest colours, red, poppy, orange, apricot, with borders, black or white *à la grecque;* they were of every shape, of every material, of every colour; they were made in cloth, kerseymere,

serge, silk network, and, more commonly, in grey rabbit fur. Shawls with tags, square shawls, overcoat shawls, for winter and summer. The fashionables began to cover their charms, and the buskin shoes disappeared by degrees.

As to the costume of the men in the middle of the year VII. here is a sketch.

The hat, half high in form, has a small border raised at the sides and depressed before and behind; the hair is always *à la Titus*, as well as the whiskers, which fall to the middle of the cheek and sometimes descend under the chin; *bon ton* requires that the whiskers should be black even although the hair be light: the *impossibles* have more than one means to satisfy the fashion.

The cravat is high, always white, and with bows pointed like rats' tails. It smothers the neck up to the ears. The frilled shirt is of fine cambric; it is seen through the large slanting cut of the waistcoat.

The coat is ordinarily of a deep brown, with black or violet collar, crossed with buttons of plain metal. The pantaloons, very close fitting, are of chamois kerseymere; over the seams dominates a small edging of gold, like the hussars. Fashion implicates an enormous show seal at the extremity of the watch chains, in place of the cane a simple small hook of bamboo, soft boots, coming up to the birth of the calf; ball dress, a

black coat, coloured breeches, and shoes. The colour of the breeches is canary yellow and bottle green.

## VI.

The fashion changed so much from 1795 to 1799, that at least two big volumes in 8vo would be wanted to describe their different characters and their principal variations. Mercier himself, who sketched on the spot with a pencil, so able and so delicate, these Parisian physiognomies, seems disconcerted to see himself so soon distanced by the change of feminine costumes.

"A few days ago," says he, "the fashionable woman's waist was modelled in the shape of a heart; now the corset ends in wings of a butterfly, which the sex seems in every respect desirous to approach, and takes so often for its model. Yesterday we had hats *à la Paméla*, to-day the hats are *à l'anglaise*; yesterday they were adorned with feathers, flowers, ribbons, or a handkerchief in the shape of a turban made them look like odalisques; to-day their bonnets take the same form as those of the wife of Philippe de Commines; yesterday their elegant shoes were laden with rosettes and fastened to the bottom

of the leg with a ribbon artistically tied; to-day a large buckle, figured with spangles, covers almost entirely their foot, and only allows to be perceived the end of a light bouquet, of which the embroidery terminates on the tiny point of the shoe. And let not any one suppose this to be a caricature of our illustrious ladies; it is hardly the merest sketch of their follies, their changes of dress varied to infinity."[1]

The *merveilleuses* survived the *incroyables* by two years; Madame Tallien, that madcap who so graciously personified them, gives us a model of their last hour. She came to Barras at the end of 1798, in a robe of muslin extremely wide, falling about her in large folds, and made in the style of the tunic of a Greek statue; the sleeves were attached to the arm by buttons of antique cameos; other cameos served as fastenings for the shoulders, the girdle; no gloves; on one of her arms a golden serpent enamelled with a head of emerald.

Trinkets in numbers were worn on the arms, neck, fingers, in bands, aigrettes on turbans. It is impossible to form an idea of the innumerable quantity of diamonds then in circulation. Neck-chains of excessive length, falling down to the knee, raised and clasped beneath the bosom, were adopted by the majority of women. Rivers

[1] Mercier, *Nouveau Tableau de Paris*, chap. xciv. Caricatures folies.

of precious stones and diamonds enclosed their throats; their girdles were gemmed, and pearls ran in zigzags over the gauze of their dresses and coiffures. Cameos, set in relief, in the toilets of Madame Bonaparte, on her return from Italy, adorned hair and neck; nay, even wigs were enriched with stars and doves, called *esprits*, in diamonds.

*Anglomanie* raged over manners and fashions no less than *anticomanie;* for certain women of fashion nothing was in good taste or of a pretty shape if custom had not established it in London. In fact some French workwomen crossed the Channel to satisfy more surely their patrons; who found again out of France the ancient establishment of Mademoiselle Bertin, the celebrated Parisian *modiste*,[1] and of numerous emigrants, then established milliners, who had vulgarised for others the exquisite taste which they showed once at Court for themselves.

Out of the land of fogs there came to us the wadded garments bordered with velvet, the spencer, bordered with fur, open over the half-naked breast, giving to women a false Ladoïska air; country bonnets, dolmans, which they spelt *dolimans*, and a multitude of costumes of equally happy arrangement. The crowned hats in lawn, book muslin, lace with pearled edgings, were

[1] *Tableau général du goût, des modes et costumes de Paris*, an V.

well received at the end of the year VII.; they were worn in white rose jonquil or blue; they accompanied the fashion of apron fichus of assorted colour. These aprons formed at once girdle and fichu; they were originally fastened behind with ribbons in rosettes. This attire might appear, at the first glance, an object of luxury; "but," says a writer of fashions,[1] "if one came to consider the transparent fineness of the robe, which served often for chemise, one would recognise in it the same advantage which is possessed by the aprons of the savages."

## VII.

A citizen, "lover of the sex," Lucas Rochemont, dreamed, towards the end of the Directory, of opening a competition of new fashions among the truly elegant of France; the fashion which won the prize was to bear the name of its creatress. He communicated to La Mésangère this ingenious project in the following letter:—

"You speak periodically, Citizen, of the wonders of fashion, of its multiplied forms, of its unheard-of successes; but you keep silent about the seductive

[1] *Journal des dames et des modes*, 15 prairial an VII.

objects which open for it so brilliant a career. What, indeed, would fashion be without the graces of the charming sex which makes it admired? A fugitive escaping the eyes of all. But it owes everything to the fair, its elegance, its wealth, its simplicity; nothing is good, nothing is beautiful without their co-operation. Is it not good taste which admits such extravagance of fashion? and is not good taste the stamp of beauty? Therefore is it my desire, O Citizen, that, at every epoch which brings us a new fashion, you should render justice to her to whom it belongs, and call it by her name who creates it; this would be a means of exciting emulation which would give us the knowledge to whom we owe such and such a change in the dress of our ladies, and would open for us a temple where every one might have the means of carrying his incense to the feet of the divinity to whom he accorded the preference."

This original project ended in nothing, which is a pity; for with the exception of some twenty pretty women, half celebrated in the vicinity of Notre-Dame de Thermidor, we are almost completely ignorant of the names of the leaders of fashion in the epoch of the Directory. All these nymphs and merveilleuses are anonymous; all these beauties, Greek and Roman, pass by veiled, and anecdotic history remains as mute concerning them as if they had been the smart

little love-seekers of the Prés Saint-Gervais. These "proud and majestic beauties" are called Calypso, Eucharis, Phryné; they have allowed everything to be seen through their open robes by the Apollos of the day, under the yews laden with seven-coloured lamps of Frascati; but of that long masquerade in the republican gardens of Armida, few personalities sprang out; the water of pleasure, which made all their charms shine with eternal youth, has confounded them in one and the same ideal vision of charmers: of the Directory there seems only to remain a common grave of nameless courtezans.

However it may be, these extravagant fashions which, so to speak, "wiped the plaster" of the new society, these idle, incoherent, unseizable fashions which we have just described with cursive pen in the present desultory chapter, these fashions of our *Impossibles* may be considered as the fundamental types marking the transition which influenced the civil costume of the whole nineteenth century. It is for this that they deserve to find their monograph. We should like to see written the *History of Fashions under the Revolution and the Directory.* Although we have only glanced over the subject, as a cockchafer lost in that immense wardrobe of gauzes, we are none the less assured that it would be a topic full of passionate charm for any determined scholar in love with the past,

and sufficiently feminine to love to shake all these frivolities, which are so impressive and so sad because of the fair forms and the life which they once contained.

Some moralists have pretended that the vestment of women has almost always undergone the same variations as their virtue. This is possible, and the study might be made in an amusing parallel; but carry, if you will, before the tribunal of fashion the cause of the *merveilleuses* of the Directory, the sincere friends of art will still recognise that amongst these pagan women pleasure obtained a brilliant victory over decency, and that their extreme grace made their absence of dignity forgotten.

# OUR GODDESSES OF THE YEAR VIII.

## *OUR GODDESSES OF THE YEAR VIII.*

LOOK at the *Journal des Dames et des Modes* of the 5 Vendémiaire of the year VIII., and you will see that this year commences under the happiest auspices for the Parisians.

"At Tivoli," writes Sellèque, the fellow-director with La Mésangère of this precious collection, "a balloon will shortly raise into air three young adolescent girls; this aerial group will represent the Graces on the chariot of Love. What a magnificent sight!!!

"On the other hand, a physician more fearless proposes to throw himself from the top of a

column some hundred feet high, by means of a pair of wings, which will carry him. . . . Whither will they carry him? The announcement does not tell us, but it is presumed that they will carry him at the least to earth.

"It is at Rosenthal, which was at once Idalie and the Jardin Marbeuf, at the end of the Champs-Élysées, that a new Icarus is to make this hazardous experiment. It will be doubtless the departure of Zephyr; he will serve as *avant-courrier* to the Graces and to Love, and we shall all see this. What delight!!!"

It is to frivolities of this nature that the Parisians of the first days of the nineteenth century accorded all their attention. The journals talk of nothing but ascents and descents in parachutes. Aerostation is the great pleasure of the crowd. Flying men and balloons become the passion and divide the attention of the public. Some are for the men, others for the balloons. The citizeness Labrosse, with her parachute, rallies all the votes.

French spirit goes its way over these grave events: since flying came into fashion at Rosenthal and at Tivoli all sorts of pleasant observations are made about it; they can scarcely help meeting with the reciprocal salutation, *How do you fly?* "There is *flying* everywhere," simper the fashionables; "none but boobies think of walking, riding on horseback, or in a carriage; here they *fly* to

arms, there they *fly* to balls, spectacles, and some fly to gambling in all the diverse hells of the capital." Everybody wants wings; the bird of Idalia has set everybody's brains in the air.

Truly speaking and with exactitude, we are not yet at the commencement of the century; for January 1800 does not begin till II. Nivôse of the year VIII.; but it is convenient not to pause for this very slight difference of the month.

A resolution of the Bureau Central, which commands the closing of shows and public balls at ten o'clock in the evening, excites equally beyond measure the friends of pleasure; it is a revolution in customs which becomes a mighty question of the day. Preparations are made to sup after the theatres, as in the gallant times of the Regency; the coquettes of fashion, the goddesses in white tunics arrange their boudoirs for these nocturnal assemblies; the small *houris* in like manner dream of attracting to themselves at late hours youthful idlers; everywhere are organised vesper hospitalities, for our Parisian women love to sit up late and to play at *la bouillotte* and at *reversis*. At this yet undecided dawn of our fruitful century not one hour is experienced of repose, of reflection, of gravity in the inconstancy and idle frivolity of this people with whom everything begins, ends, and recommences with a song.

And yet they hurry in crowds to the exhibition of the Gobelin tapestry, in the great court of

the Museum of Natural History, as to the Salon of Living Artists, where the chief works of the great masters, nearly all consecrated to mythologic subjects, fill the principal gallery. Allegories, loves of the gods, views of Olympus, portraits of fashionable actresses of the new school, seduce the trifling public sensible to things of beauty. Nay, Danae, Mars, and Venus influenced even fashion; it is thus that the *Psyché* of Gérard made coquettes abandon paint and rendered pallor interesting.

The theatres are well attended. By a strange coincidence almost everywhere are to be seen on the stage different classes of citizens in their family circles; at Feydeau was played the *Author at Home;* at the Jeunes Artistes *The Painter at Home;* at the Ambigu-Comique they had represented with success *The Actor at Home;* and lastly, at the Opera-Comique they are to play in a few days, *Laura, or The Actress at Home.*[1] Following the citizen Gosse, who gave us *The Poet in his Family Circle,* all his fraternity in quest of a transitory fashion had immediately adopted his style; it is astonishing that we do not find represented in succession on the boards the contractor, the musician, and the journalist in the midst of their progeny. *The Précepteurs,* a posthumous work of

[1] This piece was actually played, in Vendémiaire of the year VIII., by the citizen Saint-Aubin.

Fabre d'Églantine, obtained a great success at the Théâtre-Français of the Republic.

The fashion is always the grand favourite chapter of women; it is all very well to exclaim against it; it always triumphs over the indifferent who neglect it, or the envious who cannot attain unto it. "The woman" (says an anonymous writer of the year VIII.) "who complains of the tyranny of the fashion, has made her dress-maker sit up all night because she saw at *Frascati* the night before ten hats like her own. Formerly," he adds, "fashion had an origin, a centre, fixed epochs; to-day it is born I know not where; it is maintained by I know not who, and finishes I know not how. . . . Let some extravagant person think to get himself remarked, a tradesman to utilise a remnant, a workwoman to emerge from the ruck: in dresses, hats, robes, there is something new; next morning thirty ferrets will have said, 'See, it is the fashion;' the morning after that, nothing was more delicious, and on the third day some new folly had caused the *chef-d'œuvre* to be forgotten.

"*Zélis* had married a contractor," continues the critic to finish his portrait; "no attention had been paid to her eyes, to her figure, to her spirit; but her veil, her *diligence*, and her last ball, have made her decidedly a *woman of fashion*. She is mad after painting; she has had her boudoir decorated three times; she loves

good music, and possesses a box at the Opera Comique; as to science, she has never failed to attend an aerial ascent. In addition to this, *Zélis* has servants with whom she finds fault, *protégés* to whom she gives a lift, creditors whom she never pays, a husband whom she keeps waiting, jewels and lovers whom she changes at will."

This sketch, *à la* La Bruyère, is piquant and very like; the belles of the year VIII. run no longer after sentiment nor aim at *esprit;* they speculate to please; their talents, their morals, are not matters of concern, but only their good graces and their figures; having exhausted all the resources of art, they try now only the power of nature, and show everything since they have nothing any longer to hide. Thanks to the nudities, remark the observers of that time, their forms have acquired so magnificent a development that it is a very sad case if they do not make up by the whole for particular criticisms in detail; those who have no figure have so fair a bosom! those who have no bosom have such fine arms! those who have neither arms nor bosom have such beautiful hips, so perfect a face, so seductive a neck! all is youth in 1800—all from *sixteen* to sixty.

Travesty was the rage for a while amidst these goddesses who dreamed of the sad semblances of Androgynes; the mania of wearing breeches became general in the world of these eccentric

women. Some indulgent admirers applauded the innovation, which they attributed to the difficulty of finding a cavalier to loiter through the town; so it was no unfrequent occurrence to see two ladies coursing about, one in the costume of a gentleman, riding-coat, pantaloons and boots, the other as a Hebe, half naked, happy in showing herself off at balls and spectacles, on the arm of a little rake whose bluster excited her laughter at the season of the *quid pro quos*, for the young female cupid failed not to run from fair to fair, ogling, pinching and babbling like a very little devil. Severe censors, with veiled face, declared before these broad jokes that the audacious republicans were not only Greek in costume, but still more so in manners, and that Sappho often put on the dress-coat in order more easily to go in search of "unedited" Lesbian ladies, and small tendrils worthy of attracting the attention of the *anandrynes*.

At Frascati one frequently met these coquettes playing at the god Mars; they were the last splendid days of this place of meeting; one still saw, after the expression of the time, like a river, human beauties flying across the galleries of Greek and Roman antiquities. Spreading themselves under the porticoes in the demi-salons or small rooms, then winding and turning again into the side alleys, and losing themselves at last in the kiosques, where the eye followed them no

longer. The large mirror at the bottom of the garden reflected *ad infinitum*, in a marvellous prism of colours, that billow of turbaned and veiled heads, those couples amorously interlaced, which renewed themselves every instant, head against head, whilst seated at tables in the distance thirsty nymphs were getting themselves served in open air with various creams, *tutti frutti*, and ices of all forms of which they were then so fond.

By day the promenaders went to the *Panorama* then just created, which gave a view of the whole of Paris. This new rotunda, without windows and of bizarre aspect, amused all that lounging populace and created quite a sensation; the Théâtre des Troubadours had played a *literary flash* on the subject, and a vaudeville, imprinted in the *Propagateur*, had a good success. They sang there, to the tune *Pour voir un peu comment qu'ça f'ra*, the following couplets:—

Paris no bigger than a ball
  Is a legitimate success;
A learned man will show it all
  For eighteenpence or even less.
So everyone goes, or will go,
To the Pan . . . (*bis*) Panorama show.

Its walls are built of canvas grey,
  Those walls immense of rough-hewn stone;
But I, though not five feet to-day,
  Far higher than its walls have grown.
And so for this sound cause I go
To the Pan . . . (*bis*) Panorama show.

And as every good husband must have his taunt in a perfect Parisian song, the author of the said vaudeville, a certain Levrier de Champ-Rion, took good care not to omit it. Here we have it in its innocent simplicity:—

A husband said but yesternight,
My wife, with handsome cousin Billy,
Must go and see this wondrous sight
To-morrow morning willy nilly.
And so the husband too must go
To the Pan . . . (*bis*) Panorama show.

The activity of the men of pleasure tended always in the direction of the Palais-Royal; the Circus had been consumed there two years before by a fire, and on the morrow of 18 Brumaire it had lost its name of Palais-Égalité. A garden had been constructed there where two large squares of green were separated by a basin. Of the ten balls established under the galleries some still subsisted. In the morning vice slept in these places, and the garden was frequented by the highly respectable; but after midday the speculators arrived there in crowds; it was there that the stockjobbers sketched the operations on the Bourse, conspired for bulls and bears, and acted in concert, like thieves at a fair, to assassinate the fundholder. With nightfall the scene changed: scarcely were the street lamps lit when an increasing mass rolled in burning waves around the galleries; many young men, an infinity of military,

some old libertines, many idle people, a small number of spectators, a quantity of rogues, half-naked little girls; it was the hour in which all the vices had agreed to meet, elbowing, pushing, intermeddling, where, whilst the girls were making use of their eyes, the rogues were making use of their hands. "There exists," says Sellèque, "a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, between the recluses of Venus and the pickpockets, and it is ordinarily at the common expense that the coalition makes war upon pocket-handkerchiefs, watches, purses, and pocket-books; only to make proof of this you must expect to pay sooner or later a small tribute; but there, as elsewhere, there is nothing without risk."

In these galleries of debauchery the booksellers offered for sale a thousand small obscene works which the police never got hold of; the year VIII. will remain celebrated in the memory of amateurs of delicate confessions and unveiled gallantries; the names and addresses of all the girls of the capital were sold openly, under the form of registers, with the tariff of their caresses; the *demi-castors* came there in an unheard of promiscuousness; the gambling-houses blazed, and now and then was picked up some wretch in distress who had demanded of his pistol a viaticum for eternity.

The women, in general, lived in a fatal want of occupation, which induced them to every

gratification of sense; they were enervated, little by little, in an existence easy and degrading, without morals, without guides, without self-respect; the Revolution had brought them into the street, not being able to give them the joys of home, the witty drawing-rooms of old, the taste for noble and elevated sentiments. They glided into pleasure without defence, without delight, after the fashion of brutes, having no belief, no faith, no sincere notion of the good and the true.

Sébastien Mercier, the stern republican, who did not die till 1814, and was an eye-witness of the disgraces of the new *régime*, has written, as a curious postscript to his *Nouveau tableau de Paris*, the strange pages which follow on the women of 1800.[1]

"Never were they better dressed or adorned with more cleanliness; soap has become no less indispensable than bread. They are all of them covered with those transparent shawls, which flutter over their shoulders and their naked bosoms; with those clouds of gauze which veil one half of the face to augment curiosity; with those robes which hinder them not from remaining naked. In this sylph-like, attractive attire they run to and fro, morning, noon, and

[1] *Du costume et de l'oisiveté des femmes*, by S. Mercier. *Journal des dames et des modes*, 15 brumaire an VIII.

night; nothing but white shadows are seen in our streets.

". . . Art for them must eternise spring. . . . Every morning gives them the signal or the taste of a new pleasure, of an extraordinary spectacle, of a dress-ball, or of an aeronautic ascent accompanied by detonation. There all these white shadows are closely crowded; Pleiads of beauty without powder, whose cropped hair would have passed, twenty years back, for a work of defamation. They pass before you as the figures of a picture; they seem to be without hands, but they speak to you with their eyes.

"What are we to think of this sameness of attire, of these daily promenades, of this assiduous crowding to shows? They occupy nearly all the places, and we find them again by night in the glare of the illuminations. Does Pactolus roll its waters through the midst of Paris? Who pays for all these pleasures? Does the capital enclose more millionaires than any other town in the world, and are these women the only ones in the universe who enjoy the privilege of diverting themselves without cessation, and of working never?

"To read romances, dance, and do nothing, are the three rules of conduct which they scrupulously observe. . . . Twenty years ago, young girls would not have ventured a single step from their paternal home unaccompanied by

their mothers; they walked only beneath their wing, with their eyes religiously cast down: the man whom they dared to look at was he whom they were allowed to hope for or to choose as their husband. The Revolution has changed that subordination; they run about, morning and evening, in full liberty. To walk abroad, to play, to laugh, *to draw the cards*, to quarrel about their adorers, that is their sole occupation. No more scissors, no more thimbles; they know no other pricks than those which the bow of the little winged god inflicts, and these pricks are trifling; scarcely have they left the nursery, they are no sooner wounded than healed.

". . . There is not a single promenade," writes, as a final shaft, the Parisian observer, "where we do not see children of two years softly seated upon the lap of eighteen. . . . What objects of powerful attraction are a ribbon, a hat with flowers, a spangled robe in a city where balls are a permanent institution, where virgins of twelve go very often alone, where the fiddle of the dancing-master is their sole director. Debauchery is taken for love, debauchery is created into a system, and precocious wives prepare for us an enfeebled generation."

This is certainly one of the best of the writings of that minute annotator, Sébastien Mercier, and he describes better than many others the state of morality during the first days of the Consulate,

when the libertinage created by the Directory was still at its apogee.

French society found a reorganiser in Bonaparte, who knew how to discipline the liberty on which the populace had feasted in founding the civil law, a hundred times more precious for the nation than the political. France returned to all her traditions, religious and intellectual; she raised herself up with the certitude of a morrow.

On the 18th Brumaire the spiritual empire of women resumed by degrees its sweet and consolatory sovereignty in the mundane spheres; drawing-rooms returned into honour, conversation had its turn again: one talked. For nearly eight years conversation had been an exile from its native land. This return to the usages, the entertainments of good society, took place at several hearths at the same time, in the court of the Consul, in the drawing-room of Josephine, and above all in the houses of Madame de Staël and Madame Récamier. Whilst Bonaparte was solidly reconstructing the social edifice, the ex-Madame de Beauharnais attracted to her *fêtes* all the living forces of intelligence, as well as the authorised representatives of the new France; she gathered round her the companions in glory of her husband, as well as the artists, the savants, and the members of the Institute. Whilst the

conqueror of Lodi governed, she reigned by her grace, or rather she charmed by her conciliatory kindness, by her manners somewhat frivolous and her innate coquetries.

The drawing-room of Madame de Bonaparte at the Tuileries was hardly open till the Ventôse of the year VIII.; the women who composed it at that epoch of the preparatory consulate were, according to Madame d'Abrantès:[1] "Madame de La Rochefoucauld, a little hunchback, a good creature, though *spirituelle*, and a relation of the mistress of the house; Madame de La Valette, sweet, good, and always pretty; Madame de Lameth, somewhat spherical and bearded; Madame Delaplace, who did everything geometrically, even her reverences, to please her husband; Madame de Luçay; Madame de Lauriston, always uniform in her reception, and generally loved; Madame de Rémusat, a superior woman (whose very curious *Mémoires* have been lately published); Madame de Thalouet, who bethought herself too much that she had been pretty, and not enough that she was so no longer; Madame d'Harville, unpolite by system and polite by chance."

Such was, according to the malicious and babbling spouse of Junot, the first composition of Josephine's surroundings; but many other women,

[1] Madame de Abrantès, *Histoire des salons de Paris*, t. v.

young, pretty, amiable, lost no time in coming to shine at the Tuileries. Among these were Madame Lannes, a beauty in all her splendour; Madame Savary, rather pretty than handsome, but extravagantly elegant; Madame Mortier, the future Duchesse de Trévese, sweet and affecting; Madame Bessières, gay, even-tempered, a coquette of real distinction; Mademoiselle de Beauharnais, of whom every one knows the merits and the history; Madame de Montesson, whose drawing-rooms were distinguished by munificence, and whose Wednesday dinners made them exceedingly sought after for their exceptional service; in short, a number of ladies, young and clever, whose nomenclature would be almost interminable.

The society of the Tuileries was too official; it is at Malmaison that one found the intimacy of the small lively drawing-rooms and of refreshing talk. Comedies were there played, one's pleasures were taken as at the ancient court at Trianon. After dinner the first Consul disdained not to make one at a game of prisoner's base with his aides-de-camp, or to hold the stakes at *vingt-et-un*. Malmaison was the favourite sojourn of Josephine. She loved to walk there with her companions in the midst of kiosques, rustic retreats, thatched cottages around the small lakes, into which white and black swans brought life. In this simple abode, from which the magnifi-

cence of luxury was excluded, she lived after her own heart, far from the bustle of that nascent court which was imposed upon her by the ambition of her master; never dreaming that a day would soon arrive when the reason of State would conduct her into this peaceful retreat as into exile, after a notorious and cruel divorce.

The drawing-room of Madame de Staël before she quitted Paris by the order of Bonaparte, who favoured so little his most sincere admirer, was more a kind of *emporium of wit*, a veritable drawing-room of conversation; it will be seen in many aspects in the romance of *Delphine*. "She received many people," says Madame de Rémusat;[1] "all political questions were discussed at her house with freedom. Louis Bonaparte, then very young, visited her sometimes, and took pleasure in conversation; his brother was disturbed by this, forbade him that society, and caused him to be watched. Men of letters were to be seen there, publicists, men of the Revolution, and grand people. This woman," said the first Consul, "teaches those to think who would never have done so of their own accord, or who had forgotten how."

Madame de Staël had a taste for animated conversation, and extended this taste even to discussions in which she took no part. "They

[1] *Mémoires de Madame de Rémusat* (1802–1808), t. ii. Paris, Lévy, 1880.

amused her," writes the Duc de Broglie,[1] "by sustaining with vivacity all sorts of singular opinions, and every one took his pleasure therein. There were battles to the death in society, enormous sword strokes were dealt, but none held them in remembrance. . . . Her drawing-room was that hall of Odin, in the paradise of the Scandinavians, where the slain warriors rise again on their feet and recommence their fights."

Madame de Staël, however, did not preserve, under the Consulate, the bold political action which she had sustained precedently in the *constitutional circle*, in which her friend Benjamin Constant was king. Those who attended her reunions were looked on with suspicion, and the courtiers of the future emperor were too prudent to frequent the supper-chamber of the author of the *Lettres sur Rousseau*. A remarkable drawing of Debucourt, from the Collection Hennin in the National Library, represents a *Conference of Madame de Staël*, by a fair summer's evening at the garden of the Luxembourg; men and women form a circle around her, and the conversation seems full of life.

The drawing-room of Madame Récamier, Rue du Mont Blanc, afterwards at Clichy-la-Garenne, was more specially literary than that of *Delphine;* it was a very field of conciliation for all parties,

[1] Preface of Monsieur le duc de Broglie to the *Mémoires de Madame de Staël* (*Dix années d'exil*).

for politics found there not a single echo; the dazzling beauty of the mistress of the house made her no less celebrated than her wit rendered her amiable. The portraits of her, which have been left to us by Gérard and David, make us understand the admiration which she met with in every place where her Hebe-like freshness and the grace of her smile of eighteen years displayed themselves. At this epoch in which society was composed of so many contrary interests, of hostile passions, of different professions, and of exaggerated pretensions, the reunions seemed full of asperities, and good manners had not yet sufficiently got the upper hand to prevent one fearing at every instant some shock, collision, or grating of manifest vanities. The talent of Madame Récamier was to bring about peace, concord, goodwill, wherever her charms reigned. In her drawing-rooms the noble susceptibilities of men of letters were awhile at loggerheads with the arrogance of the sword; but the charming hostess preferred constantly the man of talent to the man in place, and the sincere artist to the simple courtier.

"Madame Récamier," tells the author of the *Salons de Paris*,[1] "is the first person who had open house for receptions; many people flocked to her in the first place because of her husband's position, but afterwards for her own sake; there

[1] Madame d'Abrantès, *Histoire des salons de Paris*, t. vi.

was another way of living, another society than that which of necessity her taste was unable to comprehend with men who are acquainted with and understand life. Carried in the direction of good company by her nature, loving the distinguished, seeking it and wishing to have an interior happiness in that house, where luxury was not for her everything, and where her heart sought for friends, she formed a society for herself, and, in spite of her youth, she had the glory from that moment of serving as a rule and model for other women."

Garat was to be met at her house, with that charm of song *fêted* and renowned in all directions, Monsieur Dupaty, Hoffman, Benjamin Constant, Monsieur Després with his malicious banter, Adrian and Mathieu de Montmorency, Monsieur de Bouillé and often also Monsieur de Chateaubriand, the great friend, the half-god of the days to come, Monsieur de Bonald, Monsieur de Valence, Monsieur Ouvrard, Lucien Bonaparte, and all the men of good breeding, of courteous bearing, who affected the extreme quintessence of refined manners. Ambassadors, generals, ancient revolutionists, and royalists met there with a good understanding, seeming to have abdicated all their political passions. Madame de Staël seldom failed to attend the most private drawing-rooms of her youthful rival, in whom she was pleased to recognise a superior spirit, and as it were a sweet

perfume of beauty, modesty, and perfect virtue. Amidst the ladies of this drawing-room were mentioned Lady Holland, Madame de Krudner, Mademoiselle de Sévrieux, Madame Junot, Madame Visconti, Lady Yarmouth, and all that Paris held notable amidst the greatness of French and foreign society.

It was at Madame Récamier's that the first regular balls were given in a private house after the Revolution. These *fêtes* were much sought after, and the delicious Juliette knew how to vary incessantly the attraction of her *soirées;* sometimes there was a concert, sometimes private theatricals between a couple of screens; not only were people received there with grace and touching simplicity, but they could besides admire this delicious young woman, resembling the hours of Herculaneum, dancing with the tambourine or scanning the *danse du schall,* which she had invented, which showed off the splendours of her breast and of her naked arms, the marvellous proportion of her body enveloped in a tunic *a la prêtresse,* trimmed with flowers and lace. The old Chevalier de Boufflers, who had been erased by the first Consul from the list of the proscribed, and had returned to France to regain *esprit,* said of Madame Récamier: "Never was one seen to dance better with the arms."

Another drawing-room no less brilliant, but which had its influence, was that of Madame de Genlis at the Arsenal. That inexhaustible blue-

stocking was then near sixty. Bonaparte, who judged her inoffensive as well regarding her talent as her opinions, recalled her from exile, gave her a considerable pension with lodgings at the library of the Arsenal, and the right of taking from this library all the books she judged necessary for her use. Madame de Genlis took one reception day. Saturday, every week, her drawing-room was more and more frequented by the literary and artistic world; there was composing and playing proverbs, music was listened to; sometimes Millevoye, the melancholy poet, recited with his touching voice of lamentation, which accorded so well with his face of youthful despair, some sombre and chilly elegy, whose sad notes brought tears into the women's eyes; at other times it was Dussault, who read with a certain pedantry his principal critical chit-chats of the *Journal des Débats*, or some considerations on literature in its relations with social institutions; the Count Elzéar de Sabran, brother of Madame de Custine, recited his fables with *esprit;* Monsieur Fiévée gave a sketch of his *Dot de Suzette;* and the niece of Madame de Montesson did not allow herself to be asked twice to read some chapter of her current romance. Amongst the auditors was a whole academic world: MM. Chaptal, La Harpe, Fontanes, Monsieur le Comte de Ségur, Radet, Sabattier de Castres, Choiseul-Gouffier, Cardinal Maury, and even Monsieur de Talleyrand.

In the ladies' camp, only blue stockings were

seen from the faintest to the deepest hue: MMes. de Chastenay, "adaptress" of foreign romances; the Countess Beaufort d'Hautpoul, friend of the Muses; Madame Kennen, novelist; Madame de Vannoz, author of the *Conversation*, a pretty moonlight of the poet Delille, and lastly Madame de Choiseul-Meuse, a clever woman and an amiable, who disdained not to write playful tales, which were as a feeble echo of the *Crébillonnades* of the eighteenth century. In other respects a drawing-room, which, though with folding-doors wide open, smelt terribly fusty, distilled *ennui*, and where Bonaparte wittily observed, when Madame de Genlis wished to define virtue, she spoke of it always as of a curious and bizarre discovery.

A last literary drawing-room in favour at that epoch in which the spirit of *belles-lettres* and the arts returned to France, was that of Lucien Bonaparte, of whom Fontanes, Legouvé, Joseph Chénier and Népomucène Lemercier, Chateaubriand and Dorat-Cubières were the frequent guests. Receptions multiplied every day; at the end of the Consulate the strife was who in the official world and in the exchequer could give the most brilliant assembly in Paris; thus Gallais, the observer of the manners of the time, marked with perspicuity that singular mania of receptions in the small philosophic pages which seem written only yesterday. "Those who enjoy a large fortune," he wrote, "have yet the little defect of receiving large societies. The object is always

to have a large number of carriages at one's door, many guests at one's table, a crowd in one's drawing-room; to get it reported that *all Paris* is there, that the passers-by, astounded by the vast quantity of illumined windows, should cry out: 'How beautiful is this! how happy are the folk inside!' and, notwithstanding, there is yawning, people die of *ennui*, and but for the little vanity of being able to say on the morrow, 'I was at the Duc de W.'s ball, at the dinner of Monsieur de R.'s,' one would much rather remain at home."[1]

The two greatest passions of the goddesses of the year VIII. were glory and pleasure. To assist at reviews, shows, to see defiling along the streets our victorious troops who marched on flowers, and at night to run to balls, to official *soirées*, to theatres—such was the life of our Parisian society when the Consulate was firmly seated. The three sisters of the first Consul, MMes. Élisa Baciocchi, Pauline Leclerc, and Caroline Murat, were rivals in luxury, and at the head of the social advance, as well as MMes. Régnault de Saint-Jean-d'Angély, Méchin, Visconti, Hainguerlot, always of course after Madame Bonaparte, who never abdicated the sceptre of the highest fashion and of the most decorative elegance. The emigrants who had returned to France had power enough to resuscitate the ancient balls of the Opera, which for ten years had disappeared from the list of public

[1] Gallais, *Mœurs et caractères du* XIX^e^ *siècle.*

diversions. On the 24th February 1800, the hall of the Rue de Louvois was open to a masked and travestied crowd, which flocked thither in thirst of noise, colour, and intrigues. Women of all classes of society dreamed whole days long about the making of their costumes and dominos for these carnival balls, which were exceedingly brilliant and full of fancy.

Black dominos and coloured were, however, in the majority; men wore a dress coat and a mask. Bosio has left us a curious engraving of the Ball of the Opera, which represents the ball in full animation. The great thing was to intrigue under incognito. "It is told," says the bibliophilist Jacob, "that Madame Récamier, so charming and so seductive when her face was uncovered, lost beneath her mask all her timidity, though she could never reconcile herself to make use of the thouing which was authorised in these adventurous chit-chats. Statesmen, women of the highest rank, even princes loved to show themselves at the Ball of the Opera. In one of these balls the Prince de Wurtemberg recognised Madame Récamier, who refused to be recognised; during their promenade he took from her a ring, and wrote to her the next morning: 'It is to the fairest, the most amiable, and yet the proudest of women that I address these lines, in returning to her a ring which she was kind enough to confide to me at the last ball.' The Ball of the Opera preserved, till the end of

the Empire, the tone and character of the exalted fashion."[1]

The few emigrants who had been able c to return from foreign lands had brought them a certain confusion into the fashions. hoisted the hair-purse and lace, others the p others again the pig-tail; there was antag between the wig-makers of the ancient and the modern hairdressers. The coiffu Bonaparte favoured the Titus, but the att the recalcitrants made a veritable masquer the streets.

The women, who through caprice or th coquetry tended towards the ancient orc things, were, nevertheless, enemies of pc because they feared lest the reform should them, and that, after having begun with chi and frisettes, large hoop-petticoats would b end. And their fears were just, for some agers of the court of Louis XV. had main that a woman could not be pretty wit Greek and Roman fashions, and that the c tion of manners only dated from that m when people began to wear their hair sho dresses clearly indicating their form.[2]

Madame Bonaparte was at the head c opposition; it was her part to defend grac

[1] *Directoire, Consulat et Empire.* Manners and Cust Paul Lacroix, bibliophilist Jacob.

[2] *Histoire populaire de Napoléon et de la grande ar* Marco de Saint-Hilaire.

good taste; besides, she detested straitlacedness, official entertainments; formal garments frightened her. Notwithstanding, the toilet was a part of her life; but she must have costumes of the day, robes cut low in the neck, with a high waist, supple vestments, a Roman coiffure with frontlet, fillet, or a golden hair-net enveloping the head. Who could conceive of Josephine in a powdered wig, with furbelowed petticoats; she had not the arch and delicate graces of the women of the reign of Louis XVI.; her powerful nature had no need of filling out; a robe of cashmere, moulding her figure and leaving her arms and breast bare, a tunic *à la Cornélie*, that was what her exuberant beauty required. The numerous toilets, which were furnished for her by Leroy or Mademoiselle Despaux, although of extreme richness in their trimming, were always cut skilfully, voluptuously, simply.

The women most attent to follow the fashion wore, under the Consulate, a long skirt of fine Indian calico, exceedingly delicate, with a short train, and embroidered all round, such as Mademoiselles Lolive and Beuvry, the fashionable ready-made linen-dealers, had genius enough to fashion; the ornaments below were garlands of vine leaves, of oak, of laurel, of jasmines, of nasturtiums. The body of this skirt was detached; it was cut in the fashion of a spencer,

and was called a canezou; the hem and the end of the *Amadis* sleeves were broidered with festoons; the neck had for trimming, in an ordinary way, point lace or very fine Mechlin. . . . On the head was a toque of black velvet, with two white plumes; on the shoulders a very fine cashmere shawl of a striking colour; occasionally was fastened to the black toque a long veil of Brussels point, thrown back over the side; the toilet was, of the kind, as elegant as possible. There were also seen redingotes of Indian muslin, lined with marceline, and broidered *in full* with a seed plot of flowers or stars; all the women, in the early time of the Consulate, appeared snowy in a symphony of white. The reign of the hair *à la Titus* little by little passed away; it became the fashion to wear well-matched *regrets*, with the locks lowered in front; the fashion of turbans of satin hats regained favour: nearly all were white. Here, after La Mésangère, are some indications of elaborate costumes worth noting:

"More veils over the head, more small fichus of tulle coming over the cheeks; oval turbans, hats of crape or sarcenet, very negligently draped; a few English hoods, round and flat in cowl, having in front a very large border which, following the direction of the cowl, forms a vault and sets the face in a recess. A few Tituses, many coiffures, with long hair perpendicularly raised and fixed, Chinese fashion, as it was called, on

the summit of the head. For the morning, mob caps, scarcely fastened under the chin, or crowns of broidered tulle, to which was fitted sometimes a long and large curtain going once and a half round. For riding, long-haired felt hats of a reddish grey, of which the edge is raised sometimes to the right, and at others to the left, and occasionally in front, having for ornament one or two ostrich feathers, curled, of the colour of the hat." Such were, at the commencement of the century, the principal fashionable head-dresses.

Among the jewels was cited as an article in great sale, crosses bordered with pearls or diamonds, and bracelets formed of a ribbon of gold in network. Combs, after the ancient style, still exercised the industry of jewellers; every day there was some improvement in the elegance and purity of execution of the designs of the arch, where diamonds, precious stones, and cameos had place. Wadded gowns commenced to spread themselves abroad; they were worn long, sweeping the ground, with large sleeves turned up over the wrist, and a round collar. The colour was Florentine bronze, deep chimney-sweep, dark blue or puce. The spencers, generally in black sarcenet, had very small lapels and a round collar. After the long Eastern shawls, and the square shawls of fine cloth, broidered with gold, those which were most in vogue were the six-quarter shawls, in a fine tinted calico of red crimson, in brown Egyptian earth, or in dark

blue, having for a border an embroidery of crochet of coloured silk. From different manufactories about Paris issued tinted shawls with flowerings, which were called Turkish, because their designs affected an Oriental type. In half-dress some fashionable ladies embroidered in white small fichus of poppy-red tulle, amaranth, or deep green.

Among jewels the topaz was in great request for pear-shaped earrings; those in brilliants were worn no longer in hoops, but as pendants. Many cameo shells were employed as plates surrounded by fine pearls in necklaces. Bracelets were made for the most part of braids of flat gold about the size of a ribbon. Never were worn so many. The same person sometimes showed four or five at once, placed along either arm and the wrists, to fasten the mighty sleeves which were then in fashion. The fans were of black crape or white or brown, broidered with gold, silver, or steel spangles. Their designs formed arabesques of weeping willows, of waterfalls, of sheaves; these fans were relatively small, five or six inches in length. The neck watches, with dials covered with flowers, were worn more than ever by women of fashion. Gloves were very high, covering the arm entirely, and without buttons, white, straw-coloured, or an exquisite faded green. Never did women wear more becomingly the plaited glove, which harmonised so deliciously with the costumes of the time.

The language, the table, the furniture, all was become the prey of the fashion; variety in luxury was carried to such a point that a woman, dressed in Roman fashion, thought herself bound to receive in a Roman apartment, and this same woman, by a spirit of composition, had not only to arrange her own toilet but that of her apartment. Did she dress in Greek style? at once the furniture must be Greek. Did she assume the Turkish turban and tunic? immediately the sofas and carpets of Turkey displayed their dazzling colours. Did she dress herself in the Egyptian manner? mummies must make their appearance, sphinxes, clocks in monolith, and her reception-room was furnished on the instant like an Arab tent. The favourite piece of furniture was the bed, which was ordinarily of citron or of mahogany, boat-shaped, with ornaments of pure gold, finely chased; cashmeres and Indian muslins, bordered with lace, were used for curtains; the pillows were covered with Brussels point; the counterpanes were of bordered satin. A fortune was spent upon a state bed.

In receptions all the rooms were wide, open, and lighted, and whilst the mistress of the dwelling occupied herself very graciously with the cares of her drawing-room, the invited walked everywhere about, admiring the antique sofas, the Greek chamber, the Roman bed, and the Chinese boudoir.

"The revolutionists having become rich, began

to establish themselves in the large hotels which were sold in the Faubourg Saint-Germain," says Chateaubriand, at the date of his arrival in Paris, in his *Mémoires d'outre tombe.* "On their way to become barons and counts the Jacobins spoke of nothing but the horrors of 1793, of the necessity of chastising the proletariats, and of repressing popular excess. Bonaparte, placing the Brutuses and Scævolas in his police, was preparing to dapple them with ribbons and to soil them with titles. . . . Amidst all this a vigorous generation was growing, sown in blood, but springing up only to spill that of the stranger; day by day was being accomplished the metamorphosis of republicans into imperialists, and of the tyranny of all into the despotism of one."

Let us pass on then to the Empire to judge, apart from all historic events, and better than in that epoch of transition, the fantasies of fashion and the grand coquettes through the pomp of the glorious imperial epopee.

# THE GRAND COQUETTES

OF THE

# FIRST EMPIRE.

*THE GRAND COQUETTES OF THE FIRST EMPIRE.*

EXACTLY as he afterwards admitted at St. Helena, Napoleon, on arriving at the sovereign power of the empire, had found *level ground and a clean house*, he might compose his Court according to his own ideas. He sought, as he afterwards tells us, a reasonable mean, wishing to make the dignity of the throne agree with our new morals, and above all to make that creation serve to ameliorate the manners of the great and the industry of the people. It was not certainly easy to raise a throne upon the very ground

where the reigning monarch had been judicially executed, where every year hatred of kings had been constitutionally sworn.

"Dignities, titles, decorations had to be established amidst a people who for more than fifteen years had fought to proscribe them and had triumphed. Napoleon, however, who had the art and the power of a just and suitable will, disposed of these difficulties with a high hand. He was made Emperor, he created a nobility and composed a Court; very soon victory herself seemed to take the care of strengthening and illustrating on a sudden the new order of things. All Europe recognised him, and there was at least one moment when it might be said that all the Courts of the Continent had run to Paris to compose that of the Tuileries, which became the most brilliant and the most numerous ever seen. It had its drawing-rooms, its balls, its shows, and it displayed an extraordinary magnificence and grandeur. The single person of the sovereign preserved always an extreme simplicity, which, however, served to make him recognised. The fact is that luxury, the pomp which he encouraged round about him, was, as he said, in his combinations, not in his tastes; those splendours were calculated to excite and pay our manufactories and our national industries. The ceremonies and marriage *fêtes* of the Empress, as well as those of the baptism of the King of Rome, have left far behind them all

that preceded them, and will never perhaps repeat themselves. Abroad it was the Emperor's task to re-establish whatever might put him in harmony with the other courts of Europe; but at home his constant care was to adjust ancient forms to new ways of life.

The establishment of the Empress Josephine was composed of a first chamberlain, a chamberlain introducing ambassadors, two ordinary chamberlains, two equerries, masters of the horse, and a private secretary. The council was composed of the lady in waiting, the lady of the bedchamber, the first chamberlain, the first equerry; the major-domo of the imperial establishment assisted at the council.

The women who composed the establishment of the Empress were the following ladies-in-waiting: Madame de la Rochefoucauld; the lady of the bedchamber, Madame de la Vallette; ladies of the palace, MMes. de Rémusat, Duchâtel, the Duchesse de Bassano, d'Arberg, de Mortemart, de Montmorency, de Marescot, de Bouillé, Octave de Ségur, de Chevreuse, Philippe de Ségur, de Luçay, the Marchioness Ney, the Marchioness Lannes, the Duchesse de Rovigo, de Montalivet, de Lauriston, de Vaux, Mademoiselle d'Arberg, afterwards Countess Klein, MMes. de Colbert, de Serant, and lastly Madame Gazani, the reader.

The lady of the bedchamber had under her command a first woman of the robes, Madame

Aubert, whose charge it was to busy herself with the care and support of the whole wardrobe. The Empress had besides ushers and ladies of presentation, footmen of the antechamber, and two pages to carry the train of her robe when she issued from her apartments or went into her carriage. Madame d'Abrantès, who was herself attached to the establishment of Madame Mère, and became afterwards the amiable governess of Paris, has left us some notes about these ladies of the palace.

"Our party," says she, "was then radiant with a species of glory which women seek for quite as much as men seek their own, that is, elegance and beauty. Amidst the young women who composed the court of the Empress and that of the princesses, it was difficult to cite an ugly woman, and how many were there whose beauty made without hyperbole the most real ornament of the *fêtes* which Paris saw given every day in that fairy time!"

After having spoken of the fair Marchioness Ney, niece of Madame Campan, and of the dazzling Marchioness Lannes, the wife of Junot tries to describe the charms of Madame Duchâtel, whose grandson was recently ambassador of the Republic at Vienna. "There is," says she, "a woman of the Imperial Court who appeared in the world a little before the epoch of the coronation, whose portrait is a thing which contemporary

memoirs claim, especially when written by a woman: it is Madame Duchâtel. . . . She would not furnish a model to a statuary, because her features have nothing of that regularity which the sculptor's art demands. The inexpressible charm of her figure, a charm which words can but imperfectly convey, consists in the most beautiful eyes of deep blue with long and silken lashes, and in a gracious, delicate, intelligent smile disclosing the most beautiful ivory teeth, and with all this, beautiful light hair, a small hand, a small foot, a general elegance which justified afterwards a wit altogether remarkable. From all this resulted a whole which attracted first and afterwards attached."

Madame Savary had a face, waist, and figure perfectly beautiful, and dressed herself ravishingly; as to Madame Marescot, she added to the advantages of beauty a natural taste of perfect character and a remarkable elegance.

The establishments of Madame Lætitia and the Princesses were also formed, with great care, of ladies-in-waiting, ladies to accompany them, readers, governesses, under-governesses, almoners, and chamberlains, most of them of an old nobility of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, according to that famous *system of fusion* of which Napoleon spoke later at St. Helena as having been to him so fatal in its consequences.

The drawing-room of the Empress, in the first days of the Empire, was gay and without too much show; those intrigues of the Palace were not yet seen there which afterwards made it so perilous a place for courtiers. About this time receptions were given once or twice a week by military men, men of science and of letters, who supped at the Tuileries. "They went there at eight o'clock," Madame Rémusat tells us, who is so precise on all the private details of the Tuileries; "an elegant toilet was hoisted, but not court dress; they played in the drawing-room of the ground floor, which became afterwards that of Madame. When Bonaparte arrived they passed into a hall where Italian singers gave a concert which lasted for half an hour, then they returned to the drawing-room and began playing; the Emperor going to and fro, talking or playing according to his fancy. At eleven o'clock a grand and elegant supper was served; only the women sat down. The chair of Bonaparte remained empty; he roved about the hall, eating nothing, and when supper was over he retired. To these little *soirées* the princes and princesses were always invited, the grand officers of the Empire, two or three ministers, and some marshals, generals, senators and councillors of state with their wives. Great fencing bouts of toilets happened there: the Empress appeared always, as well as her sisters-in-law, in a new dress, and with many pearls and precious stones.

She has had in her jewel-case £40,000 worth of pearls. It began to be the fashion to wear many stuffs worked with gold and silver thread, and the style of turbans established itself at Court. They were made with white or coloured muslin sewn with gold, or with very brilliant Turkish stuffs; the dress little by little assumed an Oriental form. The ladies of the Court set over robes of muslin richly broidered small short robes, open in front, in coloured stuff, with the arms, the shoulders, and the breast uncovered."

In the ordinary etiquette of the drawing-room, women were only presented at the Tuileries in full dress, with the Court mantle of velvet or silk broidered with gold, silver, and sometimes enriched with pearls and precious stones. Men came in uniform or the costume of their position, and occasionally, which the Emperor preferred, in fancy habits of velvet, silk or satin, relieved by rich embroideries, with a sword at their side. In these ultra-official reunions there was little talk but much observation—all was ears and all eyes; there were splittings up into small societies; the old nobility disdained the new-comers of the Empire. Thus a smothered excitement reigned in these drawing-rooms; spite was there, pointed remarks, double meanings and provocations had their fling; sometimes many families took fire because some small countess of the

new order of things had adroitly drawn into her camp the lover of a marchioness of the ancient Court.

It was the custom at these reunions for the Empress to sit at a table of whist with the three most distinguished and titled gentlemen of the assembly. Around the table a circle was formed; the Emperor played rarely; he went from one room to another, speaking briefly to every one, and stopping by preference in the midst of the women, with whom he loved to jest with more good nature than malicious gallantry. Napoleon loved woman more and better than has been allowed of him, but he felt the danger of abandoning himself to her. He feared her influence and her perfidies, and he had always present to his imagination the apologue of Samson and Delilah. He overcame her by his disdain of the regular siege; he must read in her beautiful eyes that the place surrendered itself, and that there as elsewhere victory was assured to him. As a matter of fact Napoleon, like the majority of military men, was a wretched lover, rather despotic than tender, sometimes brutal, often cynical, having a sort of varnish of respectable morality which he displayed on every occasion. Josephine was the only woman who by her ease, her Creole suavity, her absence of resistance and her tears, had managed to hold him captive some time; but she had to submit to all the fancies of an inflexible

master, who pushed his cruelty so far as to provoke her jealousy by a detailed recital of his caprices.

Mademoiselle Aurillon, in her *Mémoires*, tells us in fact: "As the Emperor satisfied his little passions without paying much regard to sentiment, he sacrificed without difficulty to his wife the objects of her jealousy; he did more, and in this I cannot prevent myself from expressing my disapproval; when the Empress spoke of them he told her more than she desired to know, even quoted to her hidden imperfections, and mentioned by name, *apropos* of another admission, such or such a lady of the Court, of whom there was never at any time question, and yet had refused him nothing."

Napoleon was, we must confess, the object of intrigues from all quarters, as well by love letters as by personal overtures. His genius, his incredible exploits, his wonderful good fortune were well adapted to upset the imagination of all the women and young girls of the universe. Nay, more, his face (the admirable portrait of Baron Gros bears witness) had a particular charm not to be forgotten, a charm like none other, like a powerful attraction which must have been felt by all the creatures of his Court; it can therefore be easily understood that on becoming Emperor he succeeded in turning the heads of all the grand coquettes of the capital. Constant, his *valet de*

*chambre*, he too has left us his *Mémoires*, in which he defends himself from having ever opened the door to the innumerable solicitresses of love who came to besiege him every day. "I was never willing," says he, speaking of this, "to interfere in affairs of this nature. I was not sufficiently of a grand gentleman to find such an employment honourable. It is not for fault of having been indirectly sounded, or indeed openly solicited by certain ladies who are ambitious of the title of favourites, although this title gave very few rights and privileges indeed with the Emperor. . . . Although his Majesty was pleased to resuscitate the ancient usages of the Court, the secret privileges of the first *valet de chambre* were not re-established, and I took good care not to reclaim them; many others were less scrupulous than myself."

Amongst his relations, men and women, Bonaparte found, to be sure, more complaisance, and anecdotic history reveals to us a thousand and one curious adventures, in which great generals and very near female relations of the Emperor refused not to intermeddle to please the momentary fancies of the conqueror of Austria. But it does not enter into our programme to speak here of these frivolous loves; these sketches of fashion must stop at the alcove of monarchs, and only put on the scene those vague personages who are in all times as the clothes-pegs of costumes and ideas. So we will

leave Napoleon to his glories and his historians, to cast a rapid glance over the coquetries of his time, as over the *fasti* of Paris from 1806 to 1809.

The Empress Josephine had six hundred thousand francs for her personal expenses, about one hundred and thirty thousand francs more for pin-money and charities. One might imagine that this sum was more than sufficient to face the toilets, ordinary and extraordinary, of her gracious Majesty; but Josephine was so prodigal, so generous, so giddy, so mad in her caprices that she found herself continually in debt and obliged to have recourse to the purse of the Emperor.

Her inner life at the Tuileries was disorder itself; her rooms were besieged without ceasing by poor relations and cousins twenty times removed, wardrobe dealers, jewellers, goldsmiths, fortune-tellers, painters and miniaturists who executed those innumerable portraits on canvas or on ivory which she distributed so easily to all her friends, even to tradesmen of passage and her chamber-women. She was unable to submit to any decorum, to any etiquette in this private life in which her indolence was at its ease in the midst of a confused medley of stuffs, carpets turned upside down, packages half opened. She had made of her small drawing-rooms a temple to

dress, where all strange merchants and old second-hand dealers of jewels and silks had an easy access. Bonaparte had forbidden all this mercantile horde, ragged and sordid, to enter the Palace; he had made his wife formally promise never to receive again these mongrels of the Parisian Ghetto: Josephine swore she would do so no more, wept a little, but the next day found means to get introduced to her these walking bazaars, and to live after her fashion in the dust of unpacked parcels, curious to make a catalogue of oriental silks, Persian embroideries, kerchiefs, and second-hand precious stones, charmed by their glistering colours, by the fineness of their tissues, by the unexpectedness of the unpacking.

"They brought her incessantly," says Madame Rémusat, "jewels, shawls, stuffs, gewgaws of every kind; she bought them all without ever asking the price, and for the most part forgot what she had bought. From the beginning she signified to her lady-in-waiting and to her lady of the bedchamber that they were not to meddle with her wardrobe. Everything passed between herself and her chamber-women, who were about seven or eight in number. She rose at nine o'clock; her toilet was a very long business; a part of it was quite secret and entirely given to a number of researches to keep in repair, ay, paint her person. When all this was at an end, she had her head dressed, enveloped in a long dress-

ing-gown, very elegant, and garnished with lace. Her chemises, her petticoats were embroidered and also garnished. She changed her chemise and all her linen three times a day, and never wore any but new stockings. Whilst her head was being dressed, if the ladies of the palace presented themselves at the door she had them in. When she was combed, large baskets were brought to her containing many different dresses, many hats and many shawls; in summer the dresses were of muslin or of fine calico much embroidered and much ornamented; in winter open dresses of stuff or of velvet. She chose her dress for the day, and in the morning always wore a hat trimmed with flowers and feathers, and clothes which covered her well. The number of her shawls was from three to four hundred; she made dresses of them, coverings for her bed, cushions for her dog. She had one constantly all the morning, which she draped over her shoulders with a grace I have never seen in any but her. Bonaparte, who found her shawls cover her too much, snatched them off, and sometimes pitched them into the fire; then she asked for another. She bought all those which were brought to her whatever price they were; I have seen some of them at eight, ten, and twelve thousand francs. However, shawls were one of the great luxuries of this Court; they disdained to wear any that had cost less than fifty louis, and they boasted of

the price which had been set on those which were shown to them."

The rage for shawls of cashmere, of Persia and of the Levant, as well as all the oriental taste which then dominated in the world of the grand coquettes, were the result of the expedition to Egypt, and the stuffs which our vessels had brought from Cairo and from other places. Josephine, who had already on her return from Italy brought into vogue ancient fashions in dress, and particularly frontlets in cameos, bracelets, and ear pendants, was also the first to make oriental embroideries, turbans woven with gold, and all the silks of the Indies, circulate through Paris.

Of a humour indolent and lazy, without any taste for literature, never reading, writing as seldom as possible, little made for intellectual labours, her passive nature was given entirely to the joys of the toilet and to the ornamentation of her gardens and her rooms. She avoided the theatre, and never went there except in company of the Emperor; but without issuing from her drawing-room she had the art of squandering gold with both hands to such a degree as even to irritate Bonaparte, who had in him little of the calculator, and refused his wife nothing. The day passed in different toilets; in the evening she introduced more refinement and elegance still into the disposition of her dress; generally Josephine's headdress was simple, after the antique style; she

intermingled with her beautiful black hair, raised over the top of the head, garlands of flowers, nets of pearls, or fillets starred with precious stones. Most frequently she dressed in white, upon which Napoleon doted; the Indian muslin tissue was so fine and delicate that it might have been taken for a robe of mist: this Oriental tissue cost no less than a hundred to fifty francs the ell. At the bottom of her skirt there were borders of gold broidered, and of pearls, and the body, draped in large folds, left the arms naked, and was arrested on the shoulders by cameos, buckles of diamonds, or golden lions' heads forming clasps.

The Empress had, like the most part of the elegant great ladies of the Empire, the curious preoccupation of matching all her toilets with the colour of the furniture which was to serve her for ornament and contrast; a robe of pale blue suited rooms of yellow brocatelle, and a court robe of green myrtle velvet was framed properly only amidst hangings of red poppy silk damask. This was an object of great care to all ladies loving to appear in the triumph of their fineries, and it is said that when the Princess Borghése, formerly Madame Leclerc, was received at Saint-Cloud, on the morrow of her marriage, she almost died with spite while spreading over the deep blue of the divans a sumptuous tunic of green brocade entirely embroidered with diamonds.

Madame de Rémusat, to whom we must have recourse for all the little gossip about the toilet and the tittle-tattle of the palace, hides nothing of Josephine's prodigalities. "The smallest little assembly, the most insignificant ball, were an occasion," she says, "for the order of a new dress, in spite of the numerous magazines of trappings of which store was kept in all the palaces, for she had the mania of not getting rid of anything. It would be impossible to say what sums she consumed in garments of every kind. In all the shops in Paris something was to be seen being made for her. I have seen," continues her Dame du Palais, "many lace robes of hers of forty, fifty, and even a hundred thousand francs. It is almost incredible that this taste for ornament, so completely satisfied, should never have grown weary. After the divorce at Malmaison, she maintained the same luxury, and adorned herself even when she had nobody to receive. . . . The day of her death she was for being dressed in a very elegant dressing-gown, because she thought the Emperor of Russia might perhaps come to visit her." Thus she died, all covered with rose-coloured satin and ribbons.

It may be imagined what emulation was caused in the Court by this passion of the Empress for luxury and expense, how much it was necessary to invent every day, to combine, to get done to appear with honour about her, without risk of

throwing any stain upon or disaffecting her Majesty. The Queen Hortense, the young wife of Louis Bonaparte, showed great richness in her dress, according to the fashion of the Court; but she combined with her luxury considerable discretion, order, and economy. Such was not the spirit of Caroline Murat and of the Princess Pauline Borghése, who were seized with a mad desire to eclipse their fair sister-in-law, and centered all their vanity and all their pleasure in dress and ostentation. Enraged at being placed, —they, the Bonapartes—beneath a Beauharnais, in the hierarchy of the Empire, they were at a loss what means to employ to accentuate their rivalry with Josephine, and to play without a loss under guise of cordiality and affection. They never appeared at the Tuileries save in dresses of ceremony, which cost at least fifteen to twenty thousand francs, which they often had a fancy to surcharge, in the midst of a thousand twists of embroidery, with all the jewels in their caskets.

Amongst the grand coquettes of the Court, MMes. Savary, afterwards Duchesse de Rovigo, and Maret, future Duchesse de Bassano, as well as Madame de Canisy, were placed in the first rank after the princesses; it was estimated that they expended annually more than twenty thousand crowns for their toilets, a sum which was, having regard to the value of money at the beginning of this century, considered as excessive.

In the famous quadrille executed subsequently, *The Peruvians approaching the Temple of the Sun*, it was calculated that the number of diamonds carried by the ladies of the Empire was represented by a sum of twenty millions of francs. Cries were not wanting to the tune of "It is impossible!" "It is fairyland!" as if Aladdin in person had come to the Tuileries. At the end of this century we should be less incredulous and much less dazzled.

From the Court let us pass to the town, and look at Parisian fashions in the midst of public pleasures.

The first of January 1806 put a stop to the republican calendar, which had been in use for thirteen years and a little more than three months. The year XIV. was interrupted brusquely at the beginning of Nivôse, and a return was made to the Gregorian Calendar in the public and private acts, in the correspondences, journals, and all the printed newspapers, without a single mark of dissidence. The last traces of the Republic disappeared thus. France was wholly given to its idol, its conqueror. Everywhere his return was celebrated in an overflow of enthusiasm. Out from the street rose the cries of glory: "Victory! Victory! long live the Great Army! long live the Emperor!" At the Opera, in the principal theatres

of Paris, choruses were sung to Napoleon the Great, the soldiers one met were treated as heroes. Esmenard, the imperial bard, convoked the Muses to celebrate the conqueror; the whole nation was roused in its most ardent patriotism.

Luxury and elegance advertised themselves now on all sides; official *soirées*, balls, concerts succeeded one another without a break in the new Parisian society; the senators, the members of the legislative body, the marshals of the Empire entertained the sovereign with festivals beyond compare; the dazzling uniforms of the officers of the army were wedded to dresses laden with precious stones in the shimmer of lights and flowers; never was a nearer approach made to the incredible magic of fairy tales, never perhaps did women frame their youth and their beauty in more magnificence, splendour, and show.

The fashion was still, if not nakedness veiled, at least semi-transparent, a relative nakedness. In spite of the cold, courageous Frenchwomen went their walks, their arms hardly covered, their bosom half open, their feet delicately imprisoned in silk and open-work shoes; just as the men braved death for glory, the women too braved the *flat-nosed* for pleasure and for gallantry. The most chilly coquettes ran along the boulevards and visited the shops in a light-furred redingote with a collar of swan's down, a veil covering the hood, sometimes a fur tippet added to the shawl,

or the shawl lining the redingote. The *witzchoura* had not yet appeared, and the muff had no longer the dimensions of a big cask of the size of a metre, like those of the Directory. The cut of the full dress was more full bodied than formerly, although the waist was very short, and caused the bosom to jut out higher than nature seems to indicate. Many ells of muslin were employed for the making of a dress and body; the back of a woman in full dress was widened by epaulettes, broken round by being cut low in the neck, showing off its graces in the best manner in addition to the seductive beauties of the nape; little paint or powder on the cheeks, a dead, natural pallor was in good taste, as well as disordered hair; the Titus came back again with more curls on the temple and the forehead; diadems and frontlets were worn generally. To the skirts moulding the body was added in small quantities everywhere a profusion of flowers.

Garlands of Bengal roses, heliotrope, jasmine, clove, gillyflower, red and white laurel, blue rose, were in their turns much worn, especially at the end of the Empire, when the *troubadour* fashions, *battlemented* hats, the *Mameluke* sleeves, the hair *à l'enfant*, brought us I know not what of Gothic and feudal, which agreed so well with the romantic literature, sombre, distorted, sentimental and silly, of Ducray-Duminil, of Mrs. Radcliff, or Madame de Chastenay.

From 1806 to 1809 women covered themselves with jewels to such a degree that they seemed walking shop-windows; on their fingers rings raised themselves in stories, gold chains went some eight times round the neck, heavy and massive pendants dragged down the lobe of the ear, over the arms wound like serpents the chasing and enamel of every form of bracelet; collars of pearls in twists or in fringes ornamented the head-dress, without a cap, forming a pad in front, and sometimes falling back over the shoulder. Long golden pins fixed the hair raised in Chinese fashion; diadems, formed of a leaf of laurel in gold and diamonds on the one side, of a branch of olive in gold and pearls on the other, bound round the forehead of the women of fashion. The combs were composed of a branch of weeping willow in gold, diamonds, and pearls, numerous necklaces, of which the most appreciated was the necklace *au vainqueur*, a singular mixture of hearts in cornelian, in palm wood, in sardonyx, in malachite, in lapis lazuli, suspended to a golden chain. The smelling-flask of the latest fashion was called *rose-bud;* its surface enamel and gold; the flower, finely traced in fine pearls, was painted under the actual form of a bud of eglantine.

The luxury of jewels was such that a reaction set in, and they were little by little proscribed; one began with wearing brilliants on invisible mounts, with threading pearls, ambers, amethysts,

cornelians, and agates on a simple silken cord; then insensibly the whole was relegated to the jewel-box, and the supreme good taste of 1810 was to display an absolute sobriety in the exhibition of all one's trinkets.

For men a fashion which became general was that of the *rising sun.* All chasings were made after the *rising sun:* sword-hilt, buckles, metal buttons, watch-case, embroidered parts—everywhere auroras. The reason of this fashion: emblem or caprice? It has never been discovered.

The day of a coquette of the Empire was entirely devoted to the little cares of the toilet. After her private levee she plunged herself into a Chinese bath, with perfumed almond paste, was smoothed, pumice-stoned, essenced; passed from the hand-doctor to the foot-doctor, and then, donning a muslin cloak with broidered apron, breakfasted. Then came the tradespeople, the ready-made linen-sellers, the milliners, and the indispensable professor of salutation and presentation, the consummate demonstrator of the character dance, who was called by the name of *Monsieur Courbette,* and for an hour's space taught the lengthening, rounding, and graciously waving of the arm, salutation with the hand, making a

reverence, balancing on the right or left hip, and terminated the sitting by a luminous analysis on the *Moral of the dance of commonplace.* The secretary succeeded the dancing-master; he wrote a few short missives and was quickly dismissed. It was time for the promenade in the Bois de Boulogne and Bagatelle. The light nymph dressed herself as an Amazon, threw herself on a superb courser, or had her *calèche à Parasol* got ready, or her tortoise-shell-coloured cabriolet, to make her charms admired in some rustic festival.

On her return from her drive, she proceeded to judge the effect of a certain Greek robe, executed after a new design, and, passing into her antique boudoir, gave audience to her hair-dresser. This person had already come in the morning to prepare her hair *à la Titus*, of which he only allowed to appear some curls escaping from a little bonnet. Now he presented himself for the great work, with frenzied eye, posing in artistic manner, seeking inspiration, and holding in one hand a sketch representing Mademoiselle Mars or La Duchesnois, and in the other a small band of muslin imitating a shawl, so coloured and supple was its tissue. He regarded by turns the sketch and the head of the indolent beauty, then in a deft manner he wedded stuff and hair, letting fall over the left shoulder the two unequal ends of the red or yellow shawl, then drawing backwards, and winking at the mirror, he asked of

the female fop if this head-dress *à la Benjamin* or *à la Siméon* was to her taste, swearing for his own part that it became marvellously the piquant character of her face.

In the evening, in a trimmed gown of silk plush or in a tunic of white crape, turned up with satin, she took a box at the Bouffons, or else went to hear Elleviou, the darling of Paris, always supposing she preferred not to applaud Brunet in *Ma Tante Urlurette*. A supper awaited her at her return from the theatre; a few card-tables retained her friends, and it was not before an advanced hour of the night that the grand coquette of the Empire abandoned herself to the hands of her waiting-women, and laid herself down exhausted in her fine Holland linen, her head half-hidden in a pretty nightcap ornamented with lace, her hands clothed with well-greased gloves.

From 1805 to 1814, fashion at Paris varied from week to week; the gradations of these changes are so delicate, that it is almost impossible to seize hold of them; the editors of special journals, which appeared then every five days, declare themselves unable to satisfy the curiosity of their readers, so great was the multiplicity of costumes. If, nevertheless, we place ourselves in the middle of the year 1808, we find, by a

retrospective regard, that the hair artistically curled, or *à la Ninon*, but without ornament, which formerly constituted undress, has become the *Nec plus ultra* of dress. Feathers, which were the symbol of show, of full dress, of ceremony, are no longer admitted save in the most ordinary undress. Fashion tolerates them only on a morning hat, falling here and there, lightly waving to and fro. They are neither sufficiently severe nor sufficiently pompous for a gown according to etiquette, or of the most fashionable kind. The sleeves of dresses were puffed; they represent plumpness, which is the beauty of the line of the arm. A caprice of inconstant favour, which a few years before admitted not unequal folds, has ruled that the sleeves of a lady of fashion should be plaited like the shirt frill of a fop. One must no more say, in 1808, remarks an observer, "How well dressed am I," or "How well attired is Madame such an one," but only sigh out: "*How well draped am I!*" "*God! how well Madame X—— portrays herself!*"

People began to declare that the more pretty a woman is, the less need she has of ornaments—that her attire should be simple, though elegant, and that the perfection of dress consists in sobriety of laces, in taste and grace, and not in singularity of attire, in the novelty of costumes, in the richness of stuff, nor, in fine, in the useless and ruinous

luxury of jewels. The fashionable world persuades itself that vanity is almost always the companion of bad taste. The kerchief in favour must conceal the bosom and make the shoulders stand out; the handkerchief is no longer knotted to form a purse, but the money is placed in a golden net attached to the girdle. Robes of golden or silver rain, which flourished during the early days of the reign, are no more considered as in good composition; but a veil, a shawl of woven silver wire, are regarded as of the best fashion, whether to figure at a ball or to shine at theatres. Women dance the *Belloro* or the *Chica*, and although they love pleasure to madness, pretend with a weary air that all is tiresome, insipid, and pale in the distractions of the external world.

On fine days all Paris is promenading; fundholders take the air in the direction of the Boulevards du Marais; authors go hunting old books on the quays; mothers of families walk their nurslings opposite the Panorama or on the Boulevard Montmartre; ladies of fashion, who are for displaying their rich equipages and new dresses, go to the Bois de Boulogne; more modest women, who content themselves with having their charms admired, seek the Terrasse des Feuillants and the Champs-Élysées; there, regarded in turns by the young men on horseback and the pedestrians, they have the pleasure of setting at defiance the beauties who frequent the Bois. One is suffocated

at Coblentz in order to see the fair sex seated on either side the boulevard: from Tivoli to the Coliseum, from the Coliseum to the Turkish Garden, naught is to be seen but the dresses of city wives and grisettes of all quarters; at the Champs-Élysées, officers and young worldlings on horseback, dashing folk in gigs, strive in contests of quickness and good pace, whilst financiers proudly take their ease, like churchmen ensconced in their closed *berline*, and pretty women smile in their open barouche or their one-horse carriage.

The hour for the *agréables* at the Bois de Boulogne is, in 1807, from midday to three o'clock. It was a while the fashion to go and take ices at the Café de Foy, but *bon ton* afterwards required that they should be brought to one's own house. These ices are served winter and summer for breakfast, dinner, supper, at every hour of the day. As for shows, one cannot avoid going to see Olivier and the incomparable Ravel, the two fashionable jugglers. Talma is applauded at the Français, Madame Henry at the Opéra Comique; vaudeville is neglected; the rehearsals at the Opera are crowded; at the Friday representations people show themselves in their boxes with pride, others talk about passing *divine* hours at the Academy of Arts, and to give themselves a moment of distraction go *incognito* to Brunet's.

In the drawing-room, at even, a crowd of people

of all ages meet together, many men and few women; the greater the crowd the more brilliant is the reunion considered; strangers are well received and fêted—some promenade, some converse in sets; it is only passages of wit or puns which are hawked about, and for a moment generalise the laughter. The *end of the end* of the gallantry of the time is to neglect all the women in a drawing-room, to crowd about the most beautiful, persistently staring at her, hemming her in, discussing her charms, pushing and pressing her in such a manner as to make her lose her breath. The hour of the *gavotte* arrives; they cry bravo! and applaud in advance. Zephyr darts forth, he takes by her hand the mistress of the house; a piano is got ready; everybody stands round in a ring, some get upon chairs, capers excite enthusiasm. The fair—fatigued, happy, smiling at all—goes to take an instant of repose on her Greek bed, whilst the supreme dancer receives the compliments of the greater part of the young men who remain awe-struck. Ecstatic murmurs abound: "How well you have danced! what lightness! what grace!" . . . and the hero, fanning himself with his handkerchief, proudly replies, like a scented dandy of bygone days: "It is true, I have had some *steps of inspiration*, but it is not altogether that—*I have but tumbled the gavotte.*"

What pretty pictures of Paris might be made

out of the world and manners of the Empire, which have been too little studied by writers of this end of the century! From the street to the drawing-room, from the theatre to the wine-shop, from the Court lady to the grisette, from the old guardsman to the ultra-patriotic civilian, innumerable originals might be analysed, innumerable traits of character. Posterity loves to follow Napoleon across all the battlefields of Europe, historians have gone over the traces of our victorious banners; but we have too much neglected to regard the heart of France during those years of glory, we have not sufficiently *tumbled* the Parisian gavotte, not sufficiently seen the spirit, fashions, and manners of the nation from the Consulate to the return of the Bourbons.

A scalded husband, turned economist, circulated about 1807 a paradoxical *account of annual expense of a female fop of Paris*, after her household notes. We reproduce it here, changing nothing, as a serio-comic document. Here it is :—

| | Francs. |
|---|---|
| Three hundred and sixty-five bonnets, hoods, or hats | 10,000 |
| Two cashmere shawls . . . . . | 1,200 |
| Six hundred dresses . . . . . | 25,000 |
| Three hundred and sixty-five pairs of shoes . . | 600 |
| Two hundred and fifty pairs of white stockings, as many coloured . . . . . | 3,000 |

| | Francs. |
|---|---|
| Twelve chemises | 300 |
| Rouge and white paint | 300 |
| Two veils | 4,800 |
| Elastic corsets, wigs, reticules, parasols, fans, &c. | 6,000 |
| Essences, perfumes, and other drugs to appear young and pretty | 1,200 |
| Jewels and other trifles | 10,000 |
| Furniture: Greek, Roman, Etruscan, Turkish, Arabic, Chinese, Persian, Egyptian, English and Gothic | 50,000 |
| Six saddle-horses, two driving | 10,000 |
| Carriages: French, English, Spanish, &c. | 25,000 |
| Dancing-master | 5,000 |
| French master | 300 |
| A bed | 20,000 |
| Articles in the journals, boxes at theatres, concerts, &c. | 30,000 |
| Works of beneficence and charity | 100 |
| Total | 190,000 |

Add to this the expenses of her establishment, servants, food, extraordinary presents, lottery tickets, losses at bouillotte, and we reach more than one hundred thousand crowns, a respectable figure for the little expenses of a grand coquette.

Shawls were always the principal of a woman's toilet; they were very dear, and much sought after, less rare, however, than under the Directory. Originally cashmeres were something extraordinary and a matter of envy; little by little they spread universally over the realm of fashion, and served a thousand uses as turbans, redingotes, gowns, and were used even for the decoration

of furniture. Then Oriental shawls introduced colour and a glistening effect of drapery into theatres when they fell negligently over the front of the box; the graceful woman of fashion turned them to every possible account, in the antique dance, in the promenade, in coming from the theatre; they draped them about the head, rolled them about their breasts, squeezing with a delicious movement of the hands their chilly bosom.

The cashmere shawl played a considerable part in exalted and wealthy Parisian society.

"It is on this point of dress and fashion that Frenchwomen are most fallible, and lose all that is most interesting in their character or respectable in their conduct," wrote Lady Morgan in her book on France. "Here economy ends and extravagance begins to know no bounds. The merits of the *divine* cashmere and the *joli mouchoir de poche brodé* rapidly succeed to financial discussions and political arguments; and '*combien de kachemires avez-vous, ma chère?*' is a question asked with more importance and considered with more gravity than would be given to the new political tracts of MM. Chateaubriand and Fiévée by the many fair disciples of those grand viziers of *ultra-stateswomen.*

"The elegant produce of the Indian loom is an indispensable object to every Frenchwoman, and from the estimation it is held in, one would suppose

there was magic in the web of it. I shall never forget," continues the former Miss Owenson, "the mingled emotions of pity and amazement I excited in one of my French friends by assuring her I had never been mistress of *a kachemire*.

"'*Ah, seigneur Dieu, mais c'est inconcevable, ma belle!*' and she added that I ought to buy one with the produce of my next work. I replied, I had rather buy a little estate with it. '*Eh bien, ma chère,*' she answered quickly, '*un kachemire, c'est une terre, n'est-ce pas?*'"

That which Lady Morgan does not sufficiently embellish, that which she was not able to understand in her quality of Englishwoman, is that a cashmere was considered as an heirloom in a family. "It is a piece of furniture," people said, and, as a matter of fact, these cashmeres of our ancestresses were transmitted from generation to generation, and often we may yet behold them here and there at the bottom of certain respectable old provincial clothes-chests, having preserved a marvellous fineness of tissue, and, as it were, the wonderful colouration of an ancient church window.

The cape of cloth and the hooded *witzchoura* excluded the shawl from the fashion in the last years of the Empire; the *witzchoura*, an unhappy vestment which concealed the figure, suited neither women too small nor those charged with plumpness; the furriers alone made it pay, and

sold this garment at an exorbitant price. Furs, especially ermine, were worn in profusion from 1810 to 1814; nothing was seen but robes lined with ermine, witzchouras, spencers, redingotes, ermine muffs; women covered themselves as much as they were formerly uncovered. Charming costumes in other respects, which engravings have reproduced as marvels of taste and elegance.

About these fashions of the Empire we ought to tarry awhile, to look one by one at these charming habiliments which, during ten years, varied so many times in dispositions, so frequently happy, that we should have to describe more than a thousand different costumes without giving a complete idea of their exquisite fancies. We should have to examine the influence exercised by Marie Louise on feminine habiliments after the second marriage of Napoleon, and how the latter managed to maintain the supremacy of the French toilet. But these studies and these considerations, futile in appearance, would drag us beyond our prescribed bounds into minute descriptions, which it would be necessary to enliven with plates indispensable to the comprehension of the text. These charming fashions, never to be caught—a feather from a butterfly's wing would be required to detail their charms and inconstancy; and also, we must confess it, style has a sex, and it would be a woman's work to embroider the fancy on so fugitive a subject, which is insepar-

able from the art of pleasing. Let us console ourselves with this modest approximation. Did not La Bruyère say, as far back as 1680, "One fashion has scarcely destroyed another when it is abolished by one yet newer, which in its turn makes way for that which follows it, and will not be the last. . . . Such is our lightness! During these revolutions a century has passed away, which has made all these gay attires things of the past which are no longer. The fashion which was then the most curious and the most pleasant to behold, is the most ancient."

# THE MIRROR OF FASHIONS

UNDER

## THE RESTORATION.

*THE MIRROR OF FASHIONS UNDER THE RESTORATION.*

PRECISELY during the first days of the Restoration, when Napoleon had scarcely yet set foot on the isle of Elba, and Paris, overwhelmed by so many precipitous events, was still delivered into the hands of the Allies, a grave question, thoroughly French, was discussed at the Tuileries between Louis XVIII., the Prince de Foix, the Duc de la Châtre, the Marquis de Brezé, and different dames of quality on terms of intimacy with the King.

Disquiet was theirs about the fashions of the

new France, and people dreamed seriously of making a veritable revolution in the national costume to please all those who were returning from emigration with the manners, ideas, and usages of the ancient order of things. The cut of coats, as well as the shape of dresses, uniforms, and hats, were looked upon almost as affairs of state. Should there be a return to tie-wigs, to powder, to hoop-petticoats, to furbelows, to farthingales? What was to be the dress of men and women when presented? What the court dress? . . .

The costume of one hundred and forty ladies chosen from the twelve districts of Paris to offer their homages to Her Royal Highness Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême, on her entry into the palace of the Tuileries, could not but be provisional and for the occasion; it consisted of a white silk, crape, or muslin dress, a head-dress woven with lilies, and bouquets of lilies.

Every one in the royal assembly did his best to present transcendent ideas for a vestiarian counter-revolution to the order of the day; people spoke of banishing the long redingotes, the mob caps, the outer coverings of Indian calico, the lofty hats which smelt of the Convention, the capes with triple collar, and the long breeches; it was agreed that the coat was the half of the man, and they did not forget to repeat the observation of Figaro, "A man laughs at a judge in a short coat, who would tremble at the mere sight of a

procurator in a gown." Nobody, however, came forward to present a reasonable solution capable of rallying all suffrages, and Louis XVIII., fatigued with so much vain chatter, put an end to the discussion by writing, with apparent good nature, "What would you think, my dear Dreux-Brézé, if we returned to the ruffs of our great great-grandmothers?"[1]

Speaking definitely, the return to complete white, to the snowy shine of jaconet muslin, was the only mark of the return of the Bourbons in the accoutrement of women. Fleurs-de-lys, white scarfs and cockades, hats *à la Henri IV.*, adorned with white plumes, dresses and outer coverings of Indian calico, ribbons of raw silk, flounced cloaks of white crape, garlands of lilies in the hair—such were, in the middle of the year 1814, the principal distinctions of feminine costume. Few jewels, save a ring which was widely spread by reason of its allegory; it was a cable of gold, with three fleurs-de-lys of the same metal, bearing this device on white enamel: *Dieu nous les rend.* The presence of the allied troops brought into fashion English, Russian, and Polish accoutrements, without patriotism dreaming of entering a protest. Innumerable English hats were made, heavy and massive hoods, crimped, funneled, plaited, ungracious to the last degree, caps *à la Russe*, with broad bottom

[1] *Mémoires d'une femme de qualité sur Louis XVIII., sa cour et son règne*, tom. i. ch. 23. Paris, Mame et Delaunay, 1829.

and small peak, head-pieces of stuff adorned with white cock's feathers, such as were seen among the allied officers, some few turbans of white cashmere; the whole ornamented with white lilac or rose hyacinths; short dresses, scarfs worn cross-wise, Scotch caps had some months of success. The white flag which floated over the Tuileries seemed to give the tone of the toilet.

Throughout Paris were seen dresses of tender rose levantine and tunics of white merino; some were fashioned in the form of a pelisse, and had no girdle, the two flaps floating apart from each other. Dresses *à la vierge*, as they were called, forming a half-wimple, mounted to the chin; white dresses striped with small blue or rose squares multiplied; the volants of these dresses were all white, but it was a *sine quâ non* that festoons should be worn of the colour of the stripes, festoon upon festoon. The beautiful cashmere shawls of fine quality, with large palms and brilliant colours, were not dethroned by the redingotes with three collars or the pelisses; it was agreed that nothing showed better the shape of the shoulders or draped more softly a woman of elegance. Terneaux and Courtois were the favourite tradesmen; people rushed to them as soon as an arrival from the Indies was bruited abroad. The small citizens' wives, who could not afford themselves the luxury of a cashmere, bought willingly shawls of floss-silk, which were elegantly

made of lively and striking colours, with palms and broad borders. The striped scarfs in silk net, which were first called *Circassian scarfs*, were then common under the name of *scarfs of Iris*. Women knew how to wear them with a languid grace.

"Everywhere," writes Monsieur Augustin Challamel in his incomplete *Histoire de la mode*,[1] "the need of rich habiliments manifested itself. About Louis XVIII. and the Comte d'Artois were grouped the exalted royalists. The apartments of the Tuileries were never empty. In the hotels of the Faubourg Saint-Germain nothing was dreamed of but *soirées*, concerts, or balls. A great movement in commerce was manifesting itself, that was everybody's excuse.

"Paris very soon numbered four very celebrated women's tailors, thirteen milliners possessing a numerous *clientèle*, seven remarkable florists, three makers of corsets of exceedingly good taste, and eight good women's shoemakers.

"At the official or private balls white dresses commonly appeared with trimmings of flowers at the bottom. The dancers set flowers in their hair, most frequently roses. There were to be seen Scotch dresses, dresses *à l'indolente*, dresses trimmed with chinchilla. . . . The accessories varied considerably. Here the sleeves were

[1] *Histoire de la mode en France*, depuis l'époque gallo-romaine jusqu'à nos jours. 8vo. Hennuyer, 1881.

puffed, and raised in many ranks of "ruches," there they formed a tunnel, that is to say, they had a certain amplitude at the shoulders, and continually became flatter by degrees till they reached the wrist, where they were hermetically fastened by a ribbon, so as to be terminated by a skin glove of diverse colours.

"Women wore their dresses low, putting on a collar of pearls or garnet; those who adopted short sleeves did not fail to adopt also long gloves, which composed a graceful costume. They had broidered toques, trimmed with pearls, adorned with a garland of marabout; the long gloves cost a great deal, but no coquette hesitated about changing them every day, for they must have the most extreme freshness. Many were made of coloured chamois.

"Precious stones, diamonds, sapphires and rubies, flowers in sheaves and in seed-plots, broad girdles of a striking colour, precious fans, broidered or laced reticules—these completed the toilet, these gave it its value, its character. The women tied their neckerchiefs as cravats, and the young girls wore all-white dresses with aprons."

The hair was arranged in small curls, almost glued on to the forehead and the temples, and forming, towards the nape, pads hardly visible. Almost always artificial flowers were seen there, but, it must be allowed, in very small quantity.

The great preoccupation of the women of

fashion of the Restoration seems to have been in the head-dresses, and principally in the variation of the hats; from 1815 to 1830 one might easily count more than ten thousand shapes of hats and bonnets; the journals neglect even the description of dresses and mantles, to give themselves up exclusively to the art of head-dresses, Leghorn hats, silk plush hoods, velvet helmets with feathers, gros de Naples hats, or hats of flounced crape, hoods of Indian calico, turbans of muslin, *Polish* caps, *Austrian* caps, *Moabite* turbans, felt hats *à la Ourika*, mob caps of white muslin, of black velvet bordered with tulle, it was a confusion to make one lose one's head before dressing it. And what hats! Figure to yourself judges' caps disproportionately high, with incredible penthouses, like those of the fantastic dwellings of the middle ages; recall the extravagant shakos of the foot-soldiers of the Great Army, add to this heavy furniture hoods no less high than deep, dream, moreover, of the tart-moulds of the town of Gargantua, and you will have a vague idea of these massive head-dresses, charged with ribbons, flowers, cockades, twists, pads, bows of ribbons, ruches, aigrettes, and feathers; they are indeed the hats of female warriors, bassinets, *cervelières*, prodigious helms, stunning morions, in a word, head-pieces with chin-strap, *lambrequin* and ventail; but it is hard to believe that such bizarre head-coverings could

ever have protected the laughing and gracious faces of our Parisian women.

The waist of dresses progressively lengthened; towards 1822 they had returned to the normal waist which did not cut the chest in two, and left more liberty to the bosom; the art of seamstresses and tailors was reformed by logic. Dresses in the shape of blouses were worn of Indian muslin, having at the bottom five rows of embroideries in flowers of the judas-tree and four slopes; dresses of *Élodie* crape, rose, blue, or mignonette, with flounces of the same stuff. The genius of milliners, which had exhausted all the posings of insertions of slashes, of flounces, of plaits and of rolls, returned to a more simple expression of trimmings; modest silk or coloured galloons ornamented the bottom of skirts. The *canezou*, the antique canezou of the heroines of Paul de Kock, succeeded to the spencer; the pretty canezous, which became young girls so well, were so advantageous to the waist, and gave it such suppleness and infinite grace. The corset came again into favour, and its make, although yet primitive, was an art which counted but few masters. A good corset from Lacroix was not ordinarily sold for less than five louis, and yet this excellent maker could not satisfy the demand. These corsets consisted of two parts, a little cushion of white satin was added to them, which, fastening behind in the fashion of our bustles, gave the

waist more curvature, besides assisting to support the skirt. Some elastic corsets by an ingenious process laced and unlaced themselves. A steel busk, although signalled as dangerous by doctors, was the most common means of clasping the corset on the breast.

Very soon those gracious epaulettes were seen to disappear, which formed the short sleeve of dresses, and almost immediately appeared successively puffed sleeves, *leg of mutton* sleeves, *elephant* sleeves, *Tam-o'-Shanter* sleeves, sleeves *à la folle*, which brought us to the Renaissance, to bodies exaggerating the breadth of the shoulders and *wasp* waists. During the winter enormous muffs of fox and chinchilla were worn, as well as boas of fur and curled feathers, which wound round the figure, knotted themselves at the neck, fell hither and thither, and gave to women a certain provoking air of Eve in criminal conversation with the serpent of sacred history. Many mittens and palatines of swan's down were fashionable for out-door wear.

The Duchesse de Berry had vainly tried to bear the sceptre of fashion; but she never had the slightest influence on the Parisian costumes of the Restoration . . . as may easily be conceived.

The literature, and above all the romances in vogue served to give epithets to stuffs, colours, varieties of fashion, as well as successful pieces, marked events, and even the exotic animals which

had begun to be brought to the *Jardin des plantes*. The Vicomte d'Arlincourt became, thanks to his sentimental romance, the godfather of turbans *à l'Ipsiboé;* Madame de Duras, by her moving tale *Ourika*, baptized, without thinking of it, dresses, bonnets, shawls, and almost all the finery of the time. Kerchiefs were to be seen *à la Dame blanche*, *Trocadero* ribbons, which evoked the remembrance of the voyage of the Duc d'Angoulême "tra los montes," *Emma* hats, *Marie Stuart* caps, *Sultana*, *l'Edith*, *la Sévigné* head-dresses, *Élodie* stuffs, *Atala* collars, without counting the extraordinary names which people hesitated not to impose, through a feeling of composition, on certain shades of stuff about 1825. We speak not of such colours as *Nile water*, *reed*, *solitary plant*, *grains of mignonette*, *bronze*, *smoke of Navarin*, *serpent skin*, *burnt brick*, *yellow vapour* or *lava of Vesuvius;* but what will be said of the colours *frightened mouse*, *amorous toad*, *dreamy flea*, *spider meditating a crime?*

In 1827 the Pacha of Egypt sent to Charles X. a superb giraffe, which became the admiration of all Paris; it was the first ever seen in France; fashion wished to consecrate the event; in a few days everything was *after the giraffe*, hats, ornaments, girdles, head-dresses of men and women. It was the pendant to fashions *after the last sigh of Jocko* which followed the decease of a chimpanzee which had gathered to itself all the sym-

pathies of Paris, no less than lately in London the celebrated elephant Jumbo, to whom eccentric Englishwomen sent presents: fruits, bonbons, small cakes, aye, and bouquets of flowers.

Head-dresses underwent several modifications during the Restoration: in 1828 the hair was worn matted, arranged in the form of pads like mounted cannons. Monsieur Hippolyte, the able hairdresser of the time, who proudly entitled himself the Court perruquier, strove to make curls of the most unlikely construction, as tortured as the famous signature of Joseph Prud'homme. These flourishes of hair were intermingled with flowers, pearls, strings of jewels; there only wanted on the summit a small sugar Love, trembling on its brass wire, so greatly did these singular edifices resemble the master works of confectionery. In default of a Love, a variety of curled feathers were stuck into these marvels of the comb "of the invention of Monsieur Plaisir."

But let us stop, in wisdom, in these too summary descriptions of the costumes of the Restoration. Fashion is daughter of Proteus; it is impossible to fix or to portray her.

France had accepted the return of the Bourbons as a guarantee of repose and resumption of business. The new government answered the needs

of the moment; traders, orators, writers succeeded grand generals. Bonaparte had wished to make of France a grand and glorious nation; the loyalists, less ambitious, more calm, dreamed only of creating a great French family under the peaceful and paternal authority of a legitimate monarch. Society received the King not as a saviour, but as a simple guardian, without any idolatry, but with a rare sentiment of harmony and good taste. Napoleon had been in some sort the privileged lover of the nation, its cherished hero, its God; for him it had given its blood, its gold, its enthusiasms; in the hour of the bankruptcy of its illusions it accepted Louis XVIII. as a sage protector, who, in default of youth, bravery, and gallant bearing, brought to it the assurance of a life without chaos, and a sort of vague perfume of the boiled pullet of his grandfather.

The new government had then at its commencement a relative honeymoon after the interregnum of the Hundred Days. The people on all sides were apparently enthusiastic to the air of *Vive Henri IV!* or of *Charmante Gabrielle;* but in the depth of the hearts of both governed and governing there was excited a sentiment of mutual distrust. Less jaded by the conquest, the country recovered itself, the culture of letters and arts made our ancient intellectual supremacy everywhere flourish again, and that most precious politeness which the Revolution had in some

measure untaught us. From the license of the Directory, which was transformed under the Empire into a decency obtained by order, people passed to a sort of prudery as well of costume as of ideas; everyone maintained his reserve, everywhere the correct, the absolute *bon ton*, the *comme il faut*, was sought for, that supreme distinction in discreet and sober robes; show and false decorum were avoided; imperial pomp made place for simplicity.

Women, as always, were the great instigators of this happy movement. It may be said that in the drawing-rooms of the Restoration was born a new reign of women, who received only respectful homages and delicate attentions; the power, sometimes odiously despotic, of the sword-danglers vanished, to allow the appearance of the beneficent influence of men of wit and talent, of whom the modesty and the agreeable conversation were considered as so many titles to esteem and glory.

"Women of *esprit*, of a certain beauty, of a certain aristocratic relief, of a new elegance, and of a simplicity to which, however, it would not have done to trust too much, shone in all the drawing-rooms," recounts the doctor Véron.[1] "Lamartine is come; the political woman, the poetic and literary woman, have the best of the

[1] *Mémoires d'un bourgeois de Paris.* Paris, 1857, t. v. chap. vii.

game. We must revive the different classes, the different opinions of the society of that time, to render proper justice to all one met there of distinguished women having their circle, their world, their respected sceptre, and vieing among themselves in the rivalry of beauty and wit.

"After the drawing-rooms of Madame de Montcalm, of Madame de Duras, and of some others which Monsieur Villemain has described with profound regrets for the past time, a whole young world might be cited which, blossoming under the Restoration, reproduced its principal features by a poetic physiognomy, by a gracious melancholy, and by a Christian philosophy.

"Who has not seen at some ball Madame, Duchesse de Berry, lightly gliding along, scarcely touching the floor, so moving that one perceived in her a grace before knowing whether it was a beauty, a young woman with light hair boldly gilded; who has not seen appearing at that time the young Marquise de Castries in a *fête*, cannot doubtless form an idea of that new beauty, charming, aerial, applauded and honoured in the drawing-rooms of the Restoration? The society of the time which the vapourish *Elvire* of the *Méditations* had moved and made tender, lived less terrestrially and with less paganism in its tastes and in its ecstasies than had been the case under the Empire. But imposing beauty was still worthily represented with I know not what

shine of elegance, born of blood and birth, by the Duchesse de Guiche (afterwards Duchesse de Grammont). . . . Politicians were then cared for, and, so to speak, presided in the drawing-rooms of Madame de Sainte-Aulaire and the young Duchesse de Broglie. In these distinguished persons was remarked a seductive agreement of wit, thought, elevated and religious sentiments, compatible with all the attentions and all the insinuations due to politics and the world."

The women of elegance who aimed at style and importance attended the curious meetings of the Chamber of Deputies. Every woman of fashion had her favourite speaker, just as every minister was supposed to have his Egeria at the Faubourg Saint-Germain. Monsieur de Martignac had the full audiences of a tenor in the Palais Législatif, which he owed to his easy and witty eloquence, and to the beauty of his voice; the very charming Princesse de Bagration guided quite a little court of exuberant female friends in the branchy labyrinth of her politics.

In this new society of refined politeness and chivalrous wit human intelligence above all breathed freely; questions of literature and of art took the first place, and became the passion of the academies and the drawing-rooms. In the company of Madame de Duras, who had returned to France to educate her two daughters, Félicie and Clara, all the young poets and novelists of

the new generation were received with great cordiality, which put them at their ease, and with that nobleness of character which formed the characteristic of this superior woman. It was the author of *Édouard* and of *Ourika* who took Chateaubriand under her protection and obtained for him, by the intervention of Monsieur de Blacas, the ambassadorship of Sweden. Madame Récamier, on her return from Italy, was likewise reinstalled in Paris at the beginning of the Restoration, and opened, or rather half-opened, her drawing-room in the Rue du Mont-Blanc.

Among the houses most frequented, that of Madame Ripert may be mentioned, whose husband was in company with Michaud, editor of *La Quotidienne.* Royalist society of the most extreme kind made its rendezvous at Madame Ripert's, a woman enthusiastic, unstable, capricious, who passed in an instant from joy to sorrow, from calmness to anger, from audacity to fear, and, in despite of her ardent love for the Bourbons, became a Constitutionalist by the mere spirit of contradiction. At her house was to be seen Monsieur Fiévée, who was the ornament of her drawing-room, whose *ana* were complacently cited; MM. Pigeon and Missonnier, the valued editors of *La Quotidienne,* the old General Anselme, the Comte du Boutet, an amiable soldier, and lastly, Monsieur de Valmalette, the La Fontaine

fabulist of the Restoration, attended regularly at the brilliant *soirées* of Madame Ripert.

Other drawing-rooms, where the art of a prodigal wit and an agreeable conversation was carried to its height, where the heart beat with enthusiasm at noble dissertations of the intelligence, where, finally, the cult of the beautiful had numerous officiating priests, were those of the Comtesse Baraguay d'Hilliers, the Comte de Chabrol, prefect of Paris, Madame la Comtesse de Lacretelle, Madame Auger, wife of the perpetual secretary of the French Academy, Monsieur Campenon, and above all, Madame Virginie Ancelot, whose house was for some a sort of familiar ante-chamber which gave access to the Academy.

One was sure of finding at the house of the excellent Madame Ancelot, who wrote later on about these hearths of wits, then extinguished, a small but most interesting work, the majority of persons of note in Paris. Thither came faithfully Percival de Grandmaison, of tragedic fame; Guiraud, Soumet, the Comte Alfred de Vigny, Saintine, Victor Hugo, *l'enfant sublime;* Ancelot, Lacretelle, Lemontey, Baour-Lormian, Casimir Bonjour, Édouard Mennechet, Émile Deschamps, de Laville de Miremont, author of comedies in verse, the Comte de Rasséguier, Michel Beer, the brother of Meyer Beer, Armand Malitourne, as well as numerous painters and musicians. Madame

Sophie Gay, who herself held a small drawing-room, where play unfortunately was a little too high, came constantly to these reunions, as well as her delicious daughter Delphine, the future author of *Lorgnon* and of the *Canne de M. de Balzac.*

Armand Malitourne has left of Madame Ancelot a pen-and-ink portrait, very finely drawn and with great sobriety, of which these are the principal features: "Virginie," says he, "has a head admirably well posed; her movements are full of a careless grace. With brown hair, fair complexion, she abandons to her eyes all the honour of her face, which suffice for her modest and timid beauty. Sometimes she lets fall on you these beautiful eyes, of which the expression is serious and melancholy, in a manner so direct and so prolonged that such attention disquiets and charms you; she has no idea of the expression of her long looks; they are, so to speak, absent from the person who receives them; they are lightnings of the sacred fire which we must allow is hers, and of the preoccupations of her thought. A lively instinct of observation cultivated by study, a grand elevation of ideas fortified by the proof of diverse fortunes, a certain indifference of heart which proceeds not, certainly, from egotism, these are the most pronounced features of her character.

"She paints, and might write; her works would have, I believe, the merit of her pictures, that of imagination and truth."

Madame Ancelot has written and obtained popular successes; in her drawing-rooms, exclusively literary, she excelled in interpreting the game of characters and the interest of actions; she was charming in private, full of sweetness, freedom, good sense, and gaiety; the painters, Gérard, Guérin, Gros, Giraudet, the four G.'s as they were called, came frequently to her literary reunions; Laplace and Cuvier sometimes represented the sciences in that noteworthy and incomparable assembly.

The sister of the poet Vigée, Madame Lebrun, whose considerable talent has only grown with the perspective of time, who in spite of her sixty-four years, appeared young in 1816, had returned to fix herself definitely at Paris, after her innumerable peregrinations through Europe, and had opened a drawing-room which was frequented by the most choice Parisian society in the world of arts and letters.

The old friend of Rivarol, Champcenetz, and Grimod de la Reynière, painted still luminous portraits, and, passionate for music, caused to be heard at her house the best virtuosos of all Paris. Her reunions took place every Saturday, in her spacious apartments in the Rue Saint-Lazare, or at Louveciennes, in summer time, in the delicious house which she had obtained there. There were to be met at Madame Lebrun's all the ruins of the ancient Court, the survivors of the last

fair days of Versailles, and some strangers of distinction. They tried to revive in this eloquent society the amusements of other days: people played at proverbs, at charades, and grew gay even over little innocent sports; but the atmosphere of the new epoch, the philosophic and sentimental spirit of the Restoration, lent itself with difficulty to these natural and refreshing pleasures. The most constant frequenters of this drawing-room were the young Marquis de Custine, the Comte de Laugeron, and the Comte de Saint-Priest, returned from Russia, where they had taken service during the emigration; the Baron Gérard, the Comte de Vaudreuil, and the Marquis de Rivière, the beautiful Madame Grassini, already on the decline, but with a superb contralto voice which had preserved all its freshness; the Comte de la Tour du Pin de la Charce, who preserved the urbanity and the fine manners of the last century, the very type of the elegant grand gentleman; and lastly, the old Marquis de Boufflers, then assistant-curator of the Mazarine Library, fat, short, gouty, ill-clothed, and resembling in nothing the sprightly poet-cavalier of the eighteenth century, the gallant author of *Aline*, or the tender lover of Madame de Sabran.

The drawing-room of the Baron Gérard, who possessed in the Rue Bonaparte, opposite the church Saint-Germain-des-Prés, a modest little house, built after his own indications, was

generally very animated. Four small rooms composed the apartments for reception; Mademoiselle Godefroy, pupil of the great artist, a woman already aged, did the honours in company with Madame Gérard. At midnight, according to Italian fashion, people arrived at the house of the painter of the *Coronation of Charles X.* Tea was served, and some small cakes passed round. Gérard conversed with that witty force which all his contemporaries are pleased to allow him, his wife sat down to table to a fierce game of whist, and the first painter of the King and his numerous friends grew intimate. Wednesday in every week one was pretty sure to meet, in the drawing-room of the Rue Bonaparte, Mademoiselle Mars, Talma, Madame Ancelot, Mademoiselle Delphine Gay, Mérimée, Jacquemont, the Comte Lowœnhielm, the paradoxical Henry Beyle, Eugène Delacroix, and sometimes Humboldt and the Abbé de Pradt, the Comte de Forbin and Pozzo di Borgo, the Comte de Saint-Aignan and the Baron Desnoyers, Cuvier, Monsieur Heim, and diverse personages to-day forgotten.

The house of Gérard was simply furnished, and without any luxury; only on the walls were seen a few pictures and drawings of the master. The originality of his drawing-room was chiefly in the cordial understanding, the absence of constraint, the communion of spirit of men of talent who came thither solely for conversation. There

were to be heard the sallies of Stendhal on love and on women, the brilliant contradictions of Mérimée; Delphine Gay, in the dazzling freshness of her first youth, recited her naïve invocations to the Muse, whilst her mother furiously tortured the cards; Cuvier and Gérard discussed the anatomy of the human body, whilst Humboldt and the Abbé de Pradt wrestled with ardour in eloquence and erudition in the midst of a circle of connoisseurs and admirers, who judged of the excellence of the arguments provided. People left early, generally at dawn, charmed with their reception by that remarkable artist, entranced with the noble and beautiful ideas which they had heard there, wholly penetrated by that rare pleasure which is given by the society of superior intelligences.

Reunions were also frequent at the house of the Duchess d'Abrantès, Junot's widow, at the house of the savant Charles Nodier, who opened his drawing-room as an arena to romanticists and classicists; people went to make merry to the Vicomte d'Arlincourt, or Monsieur de Montyon, who appeared a green gallant, having remained faithful to the powder and the customs of bygone years; politics were talked at the house of Madame de Boigne, who received twice a week in the Rue de Lille an assembly chosen from the dovecot of the Faubourg Saint-Germain. On the other hand, people wandered sometimes into the literary

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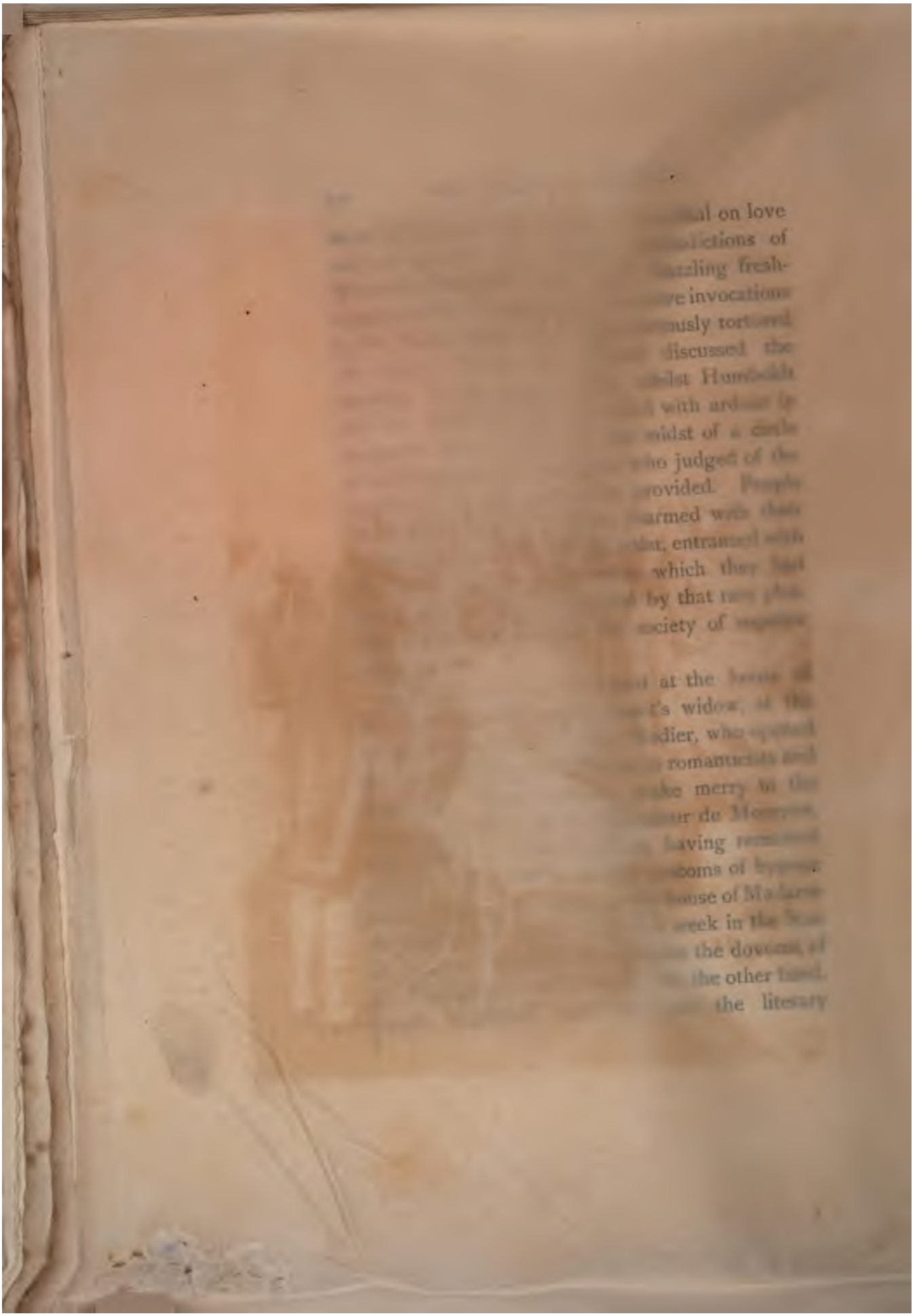


society of Madame de Chastenay, where the Vicomte Alexis de Saint-Priest declaimed without pity for his audience endless tragedies and comedies without a beginning; Madame de Flahaut was visited in her hotel in the Champs-Élysées; but the majority of these last drawing-rooms inaugurated, to speak truly, the reign of Louis-Philippe rather than terminated that of Charles X. The history of society under the Restoration is yet to be written: it would be an attractive subject. As well in politics and in art as in literature, one would there behold born in different groups all the heads of the nineteenth century, which saw the greater part of its great geniuses formed in the brilliant drawing-rooms of this period so fertile in talent.

Parisian society under the Restoration was divided into distinct classes, of which each was cantoned, confined, so to speak, in its own quarters. There was the good company of the Marais, that of the Chaussée-d'Antin, and that of the noble faubourg, without counting the free societies of artists and painters' pupils who remained firmly the non-compromisers of the Republic of the *convenances*. Let us enter, following a contemporary, Monsieur Antoine

Caillot, into a drawing-room of the Faubourg Saint-Germain. "Before a great fire are seated in a semicircle, on large arm-chairs of tapestry or crimson damask, with gilt feet and mouldings, two peers of France, two deputies of the Right side, a general officer, a bishop, a decorated abbé, two dowagers. These grave personages entertain themselves with the past time in comparing it with the present. The two old duchesses or marchionesses find nothing so ridiculous as pantaloons or hair *à la Titus*, and yet the two peers, the three deputies, and the lieutenant-general of the armies of the King wear pantaloons and have their hair cut in this fashion. One of our dowagers no longer remembers that in times gone by she could not bear to hear the name of breeches pronounced, and that she cried *Oh fie!* in turning away her head when her look fell upon small clothes somewhat too tight.

"We pass into a neighbouring room and find there two old men, cavaliers of Saint-Louis, of the Order of Malta and of the Legion of Honour, who are fencing at *tric-trac;* six paces off from them a life guard and a lieutenant of the royal guard play at *écarté* with two young countesses or baronesses. The mistress of the house plays a game of *piquet à écrire* with a King's almoner. It happens from time to time that there escapes from the drawing-room some news, true or false, which in the follow-

ing days will give some work to the frequenters of the Bourse and the journalists."[1]

If we leap from the aristocracy of the nobility to the aristocracy of finance, if from the world of ennui we pass to the world of stock-jobbing, we find three rooms in a flat, a billiard-table in one, two games of *écarté* in another, in the third men who entertain themselves with finance, politics, women who chatter about the fashions and the theatres; furniture of Jacob, bronzes of Ravrio, gew-gaws of the *Petit Dunkerque*, the great magazine of fashion, profusion of ices, small pieces of pastry and refreshments. A *bon ton* sought out, desired, too mannered, reigns amidst these rich manufacturers, brokers and bankers; a few artists who have lost their way among these Plutuses feel themselves ill at ease, parasites and speculators make their cringes before the ladies; there is more babble than conversation in a drawroom of the Chaussée-d'Antin.

At the Marais we find an old hotel adorned with serious and antique gilded interiors; pretty ancient furniture, paintings by masters, a great severity of ornamentation in the tapestries, the whole appearance contradicting the idea of a new fortune; a great fire in a mighty fireplace, candelabra, with seven branches, no lamps. Old ser-

[1] *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire des mœurs et usages des Français*, by Ant. Caillot. Tome ii. Paris, 1827.

vants in livery introduce the guests, all men of scrupulous politeness and of great affability. In the drawing-rooms are arranged three tables for *bostons*, one for *piquet*, one for *écarté* for the young folk of the house. The elder people will talk near the fireside on the indemnity of the emigrants, on Monsieur de Villèle and his three per cent., on the General Foy and the Emperor Alexander, on Bonaparte, Sainte-Hélène and the Bourbons, on Monsieur de Chateaubriand and Benjamin Constant; in a word, about a quantity of questions of the order of the day.

In the drawing-rooms of the small citizen class people meet without fashion, tea is served and *meringues à la crème*, and then a group is formed about a big table to play at *Schniff*, the *Sleeping Cat, Trottain, Fright, the running Ace*, and other small games rendered gay by the witticisms of the worthy guests.

Luxury in apartments began to be general about 1820; the dining-rooms of the richest kind were clothed with marble, others were of stucco, with mythologic attributes, where Ceres and Pomona disputed the place over the doors. In the middle, a table of massive mahogany, some sideboards breast high, and chairs covered with black velvet or horse hair; at the windows, white

curtains ornamented with a simple cotton border or a wide fringe of red wool.

Some drawing-rooms were painted, others tapestried with a profusion of vast mirrors upon the walls, and seats of wood gilt covered with point lace. The curtains of the casements, always coloured, had for support a thyrsus, a very long golden quiver, a bow or two arrows, which crossed at the points. Upon the chimney-piece, a marble clock, adorned with a statuette, generally melancholy, a dreamy Calypso or abandoned Ariadne, very many candlesticks; at the ceiling, a lustre of bronze gilt with pendants and garlands of cut crystal.

The bedroom of a Parisian woman was, above all, furnished with elegance; it was considered as a sort of drawing-room, and husbands attached very great importance to this room, exciting the admiration of strangers. This chamber was habitually composed of a commode, a secrétaire, a chiffonier, a glass on a screen called *psyché*, and a *somno* near the bed. It was not rare to see a piano in this chamber; at the bottom of the alcove was placed a glass of the same length as the bed. As all was destined to representation, the toilet cabinet was very simple, but without any idea of comfort; the women of the Restoration had no sentiment of ingenious arrangements; nothing with them suggested the nest cappadine padded with love and grace; all was cold, naked,

and almost virginal. The sofa, the arm-chairs, the beds even seemed to repel freedom and caresses, so stiff was their form, severe, and one might almost say prudish; one dreamed in blue of the ideal, but it is doubtful whether other passions could be there developed than the whimpering invocations to the Oberman or gallantries of little danger, after the manner of Louis XVIII.

A writer who signs himself *L'Indécis* has left in the *Journal des dames et des modes* of 1817 a fresh pastel of the young Parisian girl of the time: "She has beautiful light hair raised in a mat over the head; a small cashmere is cast negligently over her shoulders, her neck is of a dazzling whiteness, and her eyes by turns shine with a living fire which penetrates you, or are full of languor which enchains you.

"She is slender and light, her waist is supple and voluptuous; when she is at her harp she balances herself in preluding with an art which transports you; it is Sappho, it is Corinne!

"... What name have I pronounced? *Corinne!* Ah! my eyes fill with tears, and these melancholy harmonies, these melodious days, that ravishing voice, have brought trouble to my senses. ...

"A ring at the bell, some one comes; it is an elegant trades person, charged with flowers and collerettes. A thousand essences perfume her basket. The trimmings are thrown over the harp, over the chairs, over the floor. A pretty cloak is tried on, two or three steps are taken before the glass, there is some pouting, examination, laughter and grumbling; it must all be sent back, it is all horrible! She throws herself on the sofa, she takes a book, she reads, or rather I believe she does not read; she looks at me, I approach, she rises in a rage; she orders me to be gone, she has the megrims, she leans upon me; she suffers; she is wretched, . . . exceedingly wretched.

"Justine enters, discreetly bringing a letter for her mistress; she opens it with disquietude; I wish to see it, she tears it up; a reply is necessary; she takes from her bosom a little note-book from which she tears a leaf; she writes a couple of words in pencil, two cyphers, two symbolic signs; I am annoyed in my turn at these mysteries, I insist upon knowing. . . . *I insist upon knowing!* . . . Truly a husband's expression. She laughs at my anger; she sets herself at her frame; she wishes to be calm; she embroiders on the corner of a handkerchief a garland of myrtle and roses, Love is at the other corner with his wings and his quiver. Sports and laughter are at the opposite angles; it is quite an anacreontic

design, and the subjects are taken from the vignettes of the little *Almanach des Dames.*

"But already the handkerchief and the frame are far away; the barouche is ordered, she darts upon her rolling throne; in the rapid movement all her beauties are delineated; the attentive eye perceives at the top of a divine leg a garter adorned with a rebus.

"Drawn, dragged along, confused, dazzled, I also mount into the barouche; she is off to the Montagnes Beaujon, to the Champs-Élysées, to the Tuileries, to the *Combat des Montagnes* at Tortoni's, to the Boulevard de Gand. I should lose myself in this whirlwind without the fair star which conducts and enlightens me."

Such is the sketch of the half-day of a female worldling in the year of grace 1817.

From the month of August 1815 the *Boulevard de Gand* had become the ordinary rendezvous of the opulent class; it attracted not only the crowd, but the most impenetrable mob that can be imagined; people arranged a rendezvous without the possibility of meeting. This part of the boulevard, this *allée*, as it was then called, presented to the regards of the curious the double spectacle of beauty adorned in all its charms and of coquetry displaying in public its very last resources. The female fop came there to try her

toilet, and to show by turns her open-worked dress, her hat of gros de Naples, shadowed with marabouts, fastened by a rose of one hundred leaves, her Scotch overcoat and her satin buskins; the man of good fortune, the conqueror of the drawing-rooms, recounted there his past victories and his projects for the future; the banker spent there some hours of the day; and the ambitious little tradesman's wife made her way there by stealth to spy out the secrets of fashion, in order to return gaily home and make the most of her husband's weakness, and with due tenderness lay a tax on his uncertain revenues. Every woman came out, pressed and tumbled by this crush of the boulevard, only too happy if the half of the trimming of her dress was not taken from her on her way by the steel spur which good form fastened to the heels of all the elegant young gentlemen, whether they were riders or not.

From the Boulevard de Gand people went to Tortoni's, which had lately been newly done up, of which the rooms shone magnificently under the white and gold ceiling. Women were accustomed to enter this café, which seemed to be reserved for them; there was to be seen all the amiable youth of the capital, and it was the fashion to pass an hour there to sip punch or prolong the taste of sherbets while nibbling *gaufrettes*. One breakfasted at Tortoni's better than at the Café Anglais, or at Hardy's, Gobillard's, or Véfour's. What did

they take there? mere *nothings*, *misères*, papillotes of leveret or scallops of salmon; but all had been touched by the hand of a delicate chef. The frequenters of Tortoni's were divided into two classes quite distinct: the speculators on 'Change and the fashionables, of whom the greater part belonged to the race of the *Bœotians*. The first arrived at ten o'clock; they made a light breakfast, then commenced their game with fury: *I have fifteen hundreds!—I take them at the end of the month at sixty-five, forty.—I offer Cortés at ten and a half! . . .—Who will have ducats at seventy-six, fifty?* And so on, from eleven o'clock to one; there are cries and crossings of words, stock-jobbing flows on, an enormous mass of rents are negotiated in words at Tortoni's.

On the story above, the clan of the yellow gloves was united; nothing was seen there but pointed boots, ornamented with spurs, English coats, pantaloons with gaiters, and switches in the hand. The conversation was about dogs, horses, carriages, saddlery, races and hunts. It was the drawing-room of the *Centaurs*.

Towards the afternoon, centaurs and financiers sometimes met, cigar in mouth, on the wooden balustrade, in the form of a flight of steps, which separated the café from the boulevard, at the hour of concourse and of equipages, when it seemed to be in good taste to cite the name of all the women who alighted from their carriages at the doors of the restaurant-maker of ices.

Towards the end of the summer of 1816 one went after the hour of Tortoni's to the Quai Voltaire, in order to see in action the first steamboat destined for the service of Rouen. The little ladies and their beaux alighted from their cabriolet or their tilbury and allowed themselves to be conducted by means of a boat to the newly invented machine; there, they asked a thousand questions with an air of indolence and indifference about the mechanism, and without waiting for a reply, watched the flow of the water and looked through glasses over the bridges in the direction of the Vigier baths, which were still at the top of fashion; after that they got into their carriages to seek at the end of the Boulevard du Roule, over the ancient route de Neuilly, the *Garden of the Russian Mountains.*

These aerial mountains were the chief madness of the day; every quarter of Paris had by degrees its *mountains*, which were offered with pride to the concourse of amateurs. They were raised in the Faubourg Poissonière, at the Barrière des Trois-Couronnes, at the Champs-Élysées, on the Boulevard Montparnasse. Everywhere the crowd flocked with an eagerness which justified the calculations of the managers. The taste for mountains reached even the lowest classes of society; the artisan and the grisette rolled down in hope the whole week long, and compensated themselves on Sunday with the reality. The Russian mountains were imitated, Swiss mountains were

made. Fashion followed the managers for a long while, and dramatic authors brought that madness of the day upon the stage, and it disappeared not till the beginning of 1835. The *Russian Mountains* were played, sung, even eaten; they inspired the songmaker Oury with some very gay couplets and a curious tableau for the theatre of the Vaudeville; finally they baptized a new *bonbon* of an exquisite taste, which made the fortune of two confectioners whose fame *flew from mouth to mouth.*

All the fashionable world went to the *mountains* of the Beaujon Garden; people went to have their toilet admired, and to display their graces in gliding in the chariot, upright, moving a shawl above their head like a nymph of the dance. They mounted the chariot in pairs, husband and wife, lover and mistress; then they rushed down with no end of noise, in a whirlwind, each clasping tightly her courtier, and most frequently uttering little cries of fear which diverted the spectators; the courageous and sometimes imprudent enterprises of slender and bold women were applauded who descended these aerial mountains like sylphs; but on the other hand, people laughed or half died of ironical joy when some large obese dame contrived to mount the chariot and to roll through the spirals and curves of these precipices frightened with the thundering noise of her fall.

By the side of the mountains of the *Jardin Beaujon* was a restaurateur who made delicate cheer. The rich banker, the prodigal marquis, the puissant lord, the light coquette, found there elegant cabinets prepared for their requirements, where they tasted the unspeakable joy of casting their money madly out of the windows.

Pleasures then under the Restoration were numerous; at the extremity of the great square of the Champs-Élysées the game of tennis had regained its rights; people played at bowls and skittles with passion; the last amusement was also called the *game of Siam;* Parisian skill had also invented the swing of the turn-about. On every side those who had not become brutes by the hells of the Palais-Royal gave themselves up to physical exercises, to swimming, to riding, to running, and completed the strengthening of that strong generation of 1830, which may rightly be considered, and from different points of view, the most glorious of this wonderful century.

The Restoration had introduced above all a new form of riding; the long sojourn in England of a great number of emigrants had caused them to adopt, among other fashions of the United Kingdom, that of sitting in a certain manner on a horse and of directing its pace. And so everything —in the cavalcades and the most part of the equi-

pages of the Court—was very soon in English style. The French art of riding was excluded an instant from the riding-schools, and in the public promenades, on the boulevards, at the Bois de Boulogne, only cavaliers were seen who, according to the principles imposed on them, obeyed all the movements of their horse; only jockeys in skin breeches were seen riding English coursers. Riding was so developed that a complete regiment of the mounted national guard might have been formed composed exclusively of gentlemen clothed in the most gracious of costumes.

The Restoration, in favouring bodily exercises among the Parisian youth, rendered at the same time a real service to public morality. Debauchery was less strong than under the Empire. Everywhere a happy reaction was working; the majority of the permanent balls, which were nought but a pretext for prostitution, were abandoned or shut up; theatrical censorship, in seeing that public manners were no longer outraged, had arrested the obscenities which the mountebanks recited on their stage in public, which as well by gestures as by songs gave but too sad lessons of debauchery to the common people who assembled to applaud them and enjoy themselves.

Into the midst of all the pleasures and all the festivals of the reigns of Louis XVIII. and

Charles X. women brought a principle of sadness, of disillusion, of melancholy, which made them decry everywhere the vain pleasures of the world. To hear their groans, their sentimental and philosophic phrases on the happiness of independence and of sedentary tranquillity, one would have taken them for unfortunate victims of social conventions. All of them in appearance dreamed of a life simple, rustic, solitary, an intimate happiness of two, in a desert peopled by tenderness and love. They gave themselves as sacrifices to the exigencies of the world, to the situation of their husband, to the future of their daughters, whom they must of course accompany to balls; that feverish life, woven out of the commonplace, made up of lies and emptiness, that existence of slavery in which they dissipated their soul and their spirit was, as they affirmed, contrary to all their elevated aspirations and their innermost sentiments. How many sighs, how many discreet tears, did these beauties misunderstood let pass between their pouting lips or flow from their tender eyes! In their way of talk the society of Madame X—— was *dying;* they were *exceeded* by dinners and by balls; they ceased not to lament the necessity of adorning themselves, of passing daily four hours at their toilet; they declared that they found the French Comedy insipid, the Opera full of ennui, Brunet and Potier pitiable, Monrose heartbreaking, Perlet phlegmatic and enervating, Bobêche of bad form,

and yet they ruined themselves in shawls, dresses, and habiliments; they demanded with ardour presentations and tickets; they intrigued to get themselves admitted to every *fête*, and in a word were as liberal as they could be of their presence at every banquet, concert, theatre, and rout.

The woman of the Restoration was in fact—like the woman of every time—curious after the unknown, thirsting for the strange, in love with the unforeseen; she went everywhere in search of a strong sensation, of a sudden shock, and was not ignorant that in order to find love she must in all places display that provoking coquetry which will remain for ever amidst the vanities and lightness of the world as the necessary prolegomena of the eternal *Art of Love*.

# ROMANTIC ELEGANCES.

## *ROMANTIC ELEGANCES.*

COLLABORATRESS of the *Livre des Cent et un*, Madame Eugénie Foa, a blue-stocking after the order of the Rénaissance, will teach us what the *élegant woman* and the *woman of fashion* were in the romantic epochs, with that little dry tone, curbed and pinched, which one finds almost always in the physiologies of women written by their female contemporaries:

"To be a woman of fashion, and that is not so easy, I assure you," says the excellent Madame Foa, "you must be a little more than twenty

years of age, a little less than thirty; fat or lean is of no consequence, fair, dark, or chestnut colour is of no matter, except that the dark woman will last some few hours longer than the fair.

"The woman of fashion is always dressed with simplicity and elegance; no jewels. . . . The farseeing creature will keep them to make herself remarked when her reign is over.

"The woman of fashion will purchase her hats at *Simon's*, her bonnets at *Herbeault's*, her shoes at *Michaël's*, her boots at *Gilot's*, her gloves at *Boivin's*; she will only wear the flowers of *Batton* and the feathers of *Cartier*.

"The woman of fashion has no appointed tailor, it is she who invents a cut or makes it of value; only once, observe this well, once only she will have a dress made at *Palmyre's*, never twice; Palmyre repeats herself, and it is desolating to find at a ball three dresses of which the physiognomy agrees with your own . . . it is enough to give you the vapours.

"The woman of fashion arrives at the ball; in alighting from her carriage, she is engaged to dance; on the staircase she is engaged, on the landing she is engaged; she was engaged the previous evening, the evening before that, at the last ball; she has more invitations on entering the room than she will dance quadrilles the whole night long.

"Then the woman of fashion is surrounded so

that she cannot breathe, engaged so that she knows not to whom to answer, suffocated with compliments, if compliments suffocate, and intoxicated with incense (incense intoxicates), it is charming.

"She remains a short time at the ball, as a flash of lightning, the time to dazzle, and then away; the same effect is repeated at two other balls; she departs, returns home in good time, long before fatigue and dancing have deadened the brightness of her eyes, uncurled her hair, taken the shine off her dress. She must have it said of her: 'She only came for an instant, she has so many invitations, so many duties of society to fulfil! One caught a sight of her with difficulty; but never, never did she look so pretty!'

"The woman of fashion gets up late, passes her mornings at home, looks after her household affairs, if she has neither mother nor mother-in-law to do it for her; or she takes care of her children, if she has any, or she paints, plays, for, in the nineteenth century, women do all this and avow it. . . . Towards four o'clock she gets into a carriage which conducts her to the Bois, at the gate of which attends or does not attend her a horse already bridled for her, which her gallooned servant holds in leash, himself mounted on a fine horse. Then at her side some cavaliers caracole, seven or eight sparks, her partners of last night.

"Is it bad weather? Madame goes to pay visits,

to make purchases. Then the dinner, then the Bouffes or the Opera, from there to the ball, and so on and so on till spring, an epoch at which the woman who respects herself, the woman who has the slightest regard for her reputation, quits Paris, goes into the country, and returns more beautiful, more fresh than ever at the commencement of winter."

As you may see, this little sketch is very vague and vapourish; Madame Eugénie Foa has not fixed it by any definite trait, and it remains for us to take it up and develop it, the better to penetrate into the accent and the local colour of the moment.

The woman of fashion in 1830 is one of those women of thirty years, chanted by Balzac, whose beauty shines with all the brightness of her perfumed summer. By nature cold in appearance, and only a lover of herself, she would warm herself with the *hommages* of the world, and dress her vanities against the wall in order to receive from all parts the intoxicating caresses of the false sun of flattery; what she searches for is the emotions and enjoyments of a coquette. To preserve this place of a woman of fashion in a time when glory is so capricious, she must have as much dexterity as good fortune, as much address as beauty, as much calculation as favour-

able chance; she must have set aside her caprices, her fancies, almost her heart. To maintain this power, envied and attacked, of a woman of the world, a power which is every day called in question like the power of a prime minister, she must balance her life with prudence and policy.

Let us penetrate, if you kindly will, the home of a woman in fashion from the late hour of her getting up.

Light clouds of perfumed vapour rise from a basket of flowers sustained by a gilded tripod, and the torch of a little Love, all fashioned in enamel and precious stones, diffuses through the chamber of the young sleeping woman the uncertain shine of a night lamp. This sweet glimmer, sometimes reflected in the glasses, sometimes balancing itself on the azure draperies, penetrates the mystery of a transparent muslin, and lightens a piquant disorder, the mark of pleasures, elegance, coquetry, sentiment perhaps, in fine, of all which reveals the pretty nest of a happy woman. Cashmeres suspended on pegs, twenty shades of gauzes and ribbons which await her choice, books and feathers, flowers and jewels; extracts of works and manuscripts commenced; a piece of embroidery in which a needle is sticking; an album filled with sketches and unfinished portraits; sumptuous furniture, Gothic ornaments, paintings of fresh and sweet statues, and the emblematic timepiece which strikes eleven o'clock

of the morning, and brings the *rêve*
alcove where reposes all that youth
can unite of seductive under the
woman of fashion.

The fair one slowly awakes, her e
uncertain in the half-day of her ch
stretches herself languidly in the mois
the bedclothes; she passes, like a cares
over her forehead, burning still with
of the past night; her lips half open t
to a light and careless sigh. She ring
her waiting women to proceed to her fi
composed of a dressing-gown of wh
having a small embroidery all along
a chemisette of cambric with a t
collar, trimmed with valenciennes, an
bands adorned with the same. She
a small apron of gros de Naples of
broidered all round with a garland in
colours; a kerchief of lace knotted *e*
under her chin, then half-gloves of s
broidered in black. Finally she pu
slippers with *small points*, surrounc
favour plaited in little funnels, as
Pompadour wore them, and thus
betakes herself to the *salle à ma*
breakfast is served: a light, delicat
which one might say was composed
birds' eggs, a finger's breadth of win
to moisten her lips . . . and that is a

After noon, the woman of elegance in fashion will put on, in the first days of spring, a dress of challis sown with bouquets or small garlands forming columns; the body draped or with a shawl, within a canezou with long sleeves in broidered muslin. She will assume a scarf of plain gauze, a girdle and bracelets of variegated ribbons; upon her head she will throw coquettishly a hat of rice-straw, adorned with a simple bouquet of feathers, and, shod with boots of bright-coloured gros de Naples, she will come down to ensconce herself in a brilliant equipage to run through the town and make a few visits to different coquettes of renown, whose day of reception is marked on her small ivory agenda.

In these visits everything is talked of: it is asked what new grace fashion will give to flowers and ribbons; the reading of some pamphlet of the day is listened to, of a poem full of vapourish fictions; painting, music are discussed; doctrines are spoken of, there is much slander of the age, and all the talk of a fashionable Machiavelianism passes over their rosy lips; the whole with proper posing, correctly, with well-managed gesture, showing occasionally a corner of crumpled petticoat, a tiny foot, the fine curving of a waist, or the elegance of a gloved hand; above all, dress and the theatres are the subjects of talk.

"Marchioness, have you read the *Bon Ton* of this morning?" "No, dear Baroness, and yet I am

a subscriber, as I am to the *Gazette des Salons* and to the *Journal des Dames et des Modes.*" "There is an account of a new fashion of which I have only seen one sample at the tea of my Lord S——. Who can have given the description to the journalist? . . . Imagine, my fair darling, a dress in red poppy velvet, with a Greek body, encircled with a small gold embroidery; under the folds of this body, supported in a perfect manner, and forming puckers, as in the ancient dresses, was seen a body of white satin, also encircled with a small gold embroidery, which served for top to a blond only a few lines high and set flat. A double drapery of velvet raised and caught over the shoulder by a clasp of worked gold fell back over a blond sleeve in designs of columns and gathered at the wrist." "But, Baroness, this is simply delicious?" "Wait, it is not all: to complete this costume of a composition altogether odalisque and enriched with superb diamonds, a turban was added, of white and gold gauze, adorned with two films of bird of paradise, of which one was attached against the front, the other upon the head in an opposite direction." "God! the divine toilet!" "And so, Marchioness, I am still undecided whether to adopt it, although I am of small size, and it suits only those colossal women of the Empire, who have all the absurdities possible besides their coquetry."

" Baroness, were you at the Opera the day before yesterday?" "Of course, they played *Robert*, on which I dote; those waves of penetrating and ravishing harmony make my heart drunk; but I find Madame Damoreau feeble, and Nourrit exaggerates, and, I regret, Levasseur and Mademoiselle Dorus." " As for me, Baroness, I reserve myself for the pleasure of seeing La Taglioni in the *Sylphide;* it seems that she exercises an irresistible attraction, and that the evening on which she appears there is a crowd." " What, my little dear, you have not seen her yet? . . . but this is madness! Away with you at once . . ."

Thus conversation goes on in the visits of a woman of fashion, without mentioning the torture of wit, the turning to account of slander, the endless simpering, the boasting of ancient glories of fashion without being able to decide on the erection of new triumphs; nothing natural, but much affectation and clever dissimulation. Fashionable phrases have a forced currency. *Have you seen the Dey of Algiers? Don Pedro? The young Empress of Brazil?* Such are the questions of the day, and if you are not a barbarian, you must reply that you have seen that dethroned Dey who calls himself on his visiting cards, *Hassein, ex-Dey of Algiers*, who makes a dinner of a couple of boiled fowls, and locks up his women like banknotes; you must also insinuate that Don Pedro has a noble, cold air, somewhat melancholy, and

that his elegant shape is ravishingly marked out by his military robe. Not to be taxed with being a provincial, you may add that his young and pretty wife has a brow radiant with grace and youth, and that she needed no shimmer of diamonds to make her shine.

Our elegant woman of fashion having paid her visits, finds the possibility of betaking herself to the Exhibition of Pictures, to observe there the efforts of our young school. Her isolation stands not in her way, for the time is gone by when a woman feared to go alone to a public institution; besides, she is sure of meeting there some young dandies, the first peas of the Parisian *salons*, who will hover about her like butterflies, and analyse in her company the colouring of the pictures. She is assimilated by the life of extreme romanticism of the moment to all elevations, and she believes herself capable of pretending to all successes. She shares in her own idea with men the independence of genius, and repudiates as a foolish superstition the paltriness of prejudices. She has nothing to fear: a fool or a schoolboy alone could be ignorant that to follow a woman is but an unfashionable absurdity.

At the Salon de Peinture, Horace Vernet, Delaroche, Decamps, Couture, Ingres, Delacroix, Scheffer, Dubufe, are the names which resound a hundred times on her ears, whilst she runs through the long rooms ornamented with the pictures of the

year; the *Marguerite* of Scheffer retains her an instant, and she mixes with groups who discuss the mysticism of colouring which the painter borrows from Goethe, and the strange and vapourish charm of this composition. Paul Delaroche attracts equally her attention with his *Jeanne Gray*, dramatic as the fifth act of a tragedy. The executioner excites her enthusiasm, she appreciates above all the indefinable and touching expression of the poor Jane; around her, they declare that the model which the painter used to set in relief the charming executed one is none other than Mademoiselle Anaïs, the fair associate of the Comédie-Française, and, in order to show herself well acquainted with everything, she immediately tells the story to all the friends she meets as certain truth which she had from the lady herself.

The coquette, dizzy, intoxicated, at last returns home to undress and give her head to her hairdresser, an artist of renown, who is, at the same time, physiognomist, chemist, designer, and geometrician. This gentleman—another headsman—quickly seizes on her head, examines attentively all its forms; his compass in hand, he traces shapes, angles, triangles; he observes the distances between the angles of the forehead, assures himself of the proportions of the face, and applies himself to seize deftly upon the relations between the two sides of the forehead and the two sides of the

face, which commence its fall and terminate beneath the ears. He then imagines a kind of head-dress which tempers all that is too piquant in the physiognomy of the fair, he creates a turn-up *after the Chinese fashion*, which smoothes the hair over the temples and leaves to the forehead all its magnificence and purity of design. Sometimes, also, according to his fantasy, he weaves mats, astounding pads and pyramidals, which he skilfully raises in stories on the summit of the head, leaving on the sides two masses of small bands like grapes, which he curls and puffs with charming art.

To the questions of his client the hairdresser responds in a tone sweet and respectful; he does not always wait to be interrogated, and narrates willingly the anecdotes which have come to his knowledge or he has learnt by reading the newspapers. The hairdresser of 1830 is essentially romantic, but he has the art to show himself according to his company, either ministerial, or liberal, or royalist; he cites indifferently the *Quotidienne*, the *Drapeau blanc*, or the *Journal des Débats*. When he has disposed, with taste, upon the edifice he has so delicately raised, flowers, feathers, an aigrette, pins with fine stones, or a diadem, Figaro retires, and our lady of elegance puts on a robe of painted book-muslin, with short sleeves and low body, in the style of the Virgin; she takes with discretion a

few diamonds, earrings, and necklace, and deigns to hear that dinner is ready.

The dinner of a woman of fashion is not long; gastronomy is not a pleasure which suits her tastes; the positive of life has become its accessory; she loves to think, she wishes for an existence entirely intellectual, enjoyments which answer to the progress of her refined imagination. It is not delicate suppers nor exquisite meats which make her senses palpitate; at this time of Byronism fashion regards them not: it is the supremest good taste to die of hunger and to drink heaven's dew. She must have overflowings of politics and thrilling emotions, the exaggerations of ferocious poetry, the amorous improbabilities of the scene, the poignant sensations of bloody dramas. She is pleased with this delirium of actions and of thoughts, with the extravagances of dreams; she declares herself satisfied with existence only when she is shaken, dishevelled, jaded by the most terrifying impressions.

In the evening our coquette of the world of fashion betakes herself to the theatre before the ball; she goes by preference to the Comédie or to the *Renaissance* to saturate herself with tableaux after the school of the *ne plus ultraists;* she feels all the passions of the heroes of romanticism, she shares their intoxications and their agony. Those crimes, those amorous claspings, those

tears, those punishments, those pleasures, those eccentricities, those tortures, bring to her heart at once anguish and delight.

She feels herself in her box detached from all the constraints of artificial society, and in this moment of repose she loves to refind her natural emotions, her innate sentiments, her thoughts unadulterated by her relations with the world. She applauds with both hands and with all her soul the generous speeches, the amorous tempests, the happy endings; then, when the curtain has fallen, the woman of fashion finds all black and all empty around her; she scarcely even regards her *cavaliere servante*, who appears to her curtailed and miserable. She goes out; the world retakes her, seizes her again; she goes to bed at night in her laced nightcap, her head humming with illusions, her heart full of the noise of waves like a hollow shell; but to-morrow, when she wakes, she will think she must have been dreaming yesterday evening, and will resume the livery of Fashion, which makes her an ephemeral and dependent queen, a veritable public idol.

There was no reunion into which women were not admitted in Paris under the monarchy of July; in all the drawing-rooms they had a right to take rank either by their merit or by their beauty.

At the balls, at the Chamber of Deputies, at the

theatres and at the Saint-Simonian sermons, at the Athenæums, at the Bois de Boulogne, in fine, in every place where any movement of wit or art was to be found, one was sure to meet with women. Even the Bourse inspired them with ideas of speculation which it would be difficult to comprehend in looking at the light and frivolous expression of their physiognomy. Here is how a grave journal expresses itself on this subject, the *Constitutionnel* of November 1831 :

"The mania of the Bourse has during the last few months attained an extraordinary increase; it has seized upon women even, who now understand and employ with as much facility as the most accomplished brokers the technical terms of the parquet. They speak of option and continuation like old unlicensed stockbrokers. Every day, from half-past one to half-past three, the galleries of the Bourse are garnished with a crowd of elegant ladies, who, their eyes fixed upon the parquet, correspond by gestures with the stockbrokers: nay, there are female brokers established, who receive orders and transmit them to clerks, who carry them to the entry of the Bourse. We do not desire to name the most remarkable of these ladies; she has obtained a very pretty success at a theatre and made a large fortune, which she herself comes to turn to account at the Bourse."[1] The women who went to the

[1] It is probably Alice Ozy who is meant.

Bourse adopted a severe costume in proper harmony, almost always composed of a cloak, a velvet hood with a veil of black blond ; in the girdle they placed a small sandal-wood notebook with a pencil of gold.

On Sunday, at the Saint-Simonian sermons in the Salle Taitbout, the women of elegance filled all the first boxes on the ground-floor. It had become the fashion to attend these reunions of the Saint-Simonians, either to analyse the new doctrine or to combat its principles, or again to enjoy the sway of an eloquence truly remarkable, or to appreciate the merit of a new idea presented in a brilliant frame. The majority of the women who went there wished principally to keep themselves up in the fashionable conversation, and to comprehend as far as might be how *property in common* might one day replace *heredity*. All the seductive sophisms of the new religion were retailed by enthusiastic young apostles who had success as men and orators at the same time. The Saint-Simonian rites by no means excluded coquetry or grace, to judge by the rare elegance of the most fiery votaresses who composed this new Areopagus. There were to be found all that Herbaut, Victorine, Palmyre, and Madame Minette, of the highest fashionable reputation, made best in head-dresses, dresses, and ribbons. As for these reunions cloaks were embarrassing, these dames had adopted by preference padded

garments of thick winter satin or wimple velvet dresses with cashmeres and boas.

At the Chamber of Deputies a piquant contrast was afforded by so many gracious physiognomies and elegant forms reunited in an enclosure where only grave questions were agitated and diplomatic discussions. There, as in the great winter festivals, women of the greatest reputation for luxury and success in fashion were distinguished. There were tribunes where one saw nothing but feathers, cashmeres, and rich furs, padded gowns of orient satin, redingotes of silk velvet, cloaks of Thibet or damascened stuffs. On quitting the meetings, before seating themselves in their carriages, the ladies babbled about questions of the day, spoke of dresses, detailed reciprocally their toilets, and brought to the peristyle of the temple of the laws a great gaiety, and, as it were, the charming warbling of birds.

The fashion of riding propagated itself more and more among the women of Paris from 1830 to 1835; at one time they became almost rivals of Englishmen. Amazons were met with in all the promenades. We must observe that good form required them to be accompanied by two or three cavaliers at their side, and of a groom who kept at a distance of a hundred yards behind. Equipages were left at the barriers or the entrance of the Bois.

The costume of the Amazons underwent but

little change; it was generally a cloth skirt with a cambric canezou. About the neck a small plait, sustained by a cravat of gros de Naples, with checks, or of the colour of the skirt. Pantaloons of duck with straps, small boots, reindeer gloves, a rhinoceros whip or a switch from Verdier completed sometimes the costume. The head-dress varied; a hat of gros de Naples with argus feathers was worn, or a casquette, or a cap, or a felt which gave the gentle Amazons somewhat of a boyish bearing, an air of bluster, and often a singular figure *à la Colin*.

In summer, the Tuileries, the Champs-Élysées, attracted all the elegance of Paris. Promenaders flocked to the Tuileries from eight to nine o'clock in the evening in the months of June and July; the great *allée* resembled rather a gallery blocked with fashion than a place where one promises oneself a walk at one's ease and any amount of fresh air. It is there that the dandies, while speaking of politics, revolution, pleasure, and women, came to fill up an *entr'acte* of the theatre or to refresh themselves on issuing from a noisy dinner. Wasp-waisted sillies, dolls of the day, fashionable coquettes, arrived there in groups, accompanied by joyous coxcombs, to show their pretty toilets, to take a couple of turns through the *allée* of orange trees, and then to sit in a circle and chatter alternately of a new piece, of some past or future disturbance, of the shape of a hat, of a

newspaper squabble, of a scandal, of gallantry connected with one of the last ministers, of the catastrophes of Brazil or of Poland, and sometimes, too, of the profound accents of a new poetical work. The Champs-Élysées were also the favourite rendezvous of all the societies of the great town. A part of the superb promenade had been transformed into a vast concert-hall, and every one hastened to bring thither the tribute of his admiration. The orchestra of Musard made heard at a distance its powerful and dancing harmony; an immense enclosure had been arranged in such a manner that it could not be crossed by the crowd; tents had been constructed for reassurance in case of a storm, and not to allow the slightest disquietude to trouble the pleasure of the visitors. Everything concurred to secure the success of these pretty rustic *fêtes*, which were prolonged every evening till midnight. Under the vault of large trees, brilliantly lighted, thousands of women, women of elegance who had not yet quitted Paris and dared to show themselves, promenaded graciously and lightly, clothed in a *peignoir* of white book-muslin, or plain muslin trimmed with lace or knotted with ribbons. Double *pélerines* were seen there in channelled valenciennes mantlets, of black blonde lined with coloured taffetas, dresses of Pekin painted with tender hues and light designs on a white ground; small bouquets of blue clove gilly-

flowers on a turtle-dove ground, or branches of bellflower roses, yellow and lilac on a ground of cream; many rice-straw hats lined with coloured silk and a quantity of delicious Chinese fans.

The women, too, were charming, fresh, smart, smiling with a languid air which suited so well the style of their head-dress, the nature even of their costumes. At these Musard concerts, under a dome of illumined verdure, they recalled in some sort the poetic fiction of the Champs-Élysées of mythology; people might think they saw brought again to life the gracious heroines of the decamerons of the sixteenth century.

The concerts of the *Jardin Turc*, at the Marais, gathered around the orchestra of Tolbecque an amiable assembly, made up of the world of citizenship and commerce. The *Jardin Turc* formed a picturesque tableau, worthy of the pencil of Debucourt, with its leafy shades, its pavilions of verdure, where circulated the foaming beer and the good gaiety of the worthy folk; in the *allées* the husbands of the Marais showed without being ashamed of it their happiness and their matrimonial cordiality; excellent mothers, clothed in pretty rose ginghams, and having their shawl attached by two pins to their shoulders, came to see their little family gambol and enjoy itself; many *Jeunes-France*, escaped from the Isle Saint-Louis, sat at a table in happy fortune by the side of some fresh grisette with laughing eyes and

incarnadine mouth, whose wanton hair floated at will beneath a *Paillasson* hat. Coxcombs of the quarter, in quest of passion or of marriage, appeared solitary, satisfied with themselves, stiff in their cravat and the glaze of their canary-tail gloves, exhaling from their appointed hair a powerful perfume of bergamot.

Summer time, all the Boulevard de Gand was in delight; it was between a triple row of fashionable bearers of eye-glasses that barouches filled with pretty women crossed and re-crossed like baskets of flowers, whilst the cavalcades of dandies cast over pacific pedestrians clouds of dust. It was indeed the place of exercise of the city of Paris, a rendezvous of elegance and pleasure which there attained its apogee. The Boulevard de Gand marked the last hour of the fancies of the wit and the rare distinction of the Brummels of 1830, the hour of dandyism, of the "dishevelled orgie," and of extreme Bohemianism, which had also in a great measure its character of glory, its philosophy of dress, its originality of fair appearance, for in flying all dictatorship in the matter of toilet and ideas, Bohemianism under the monarchy of July was, as it were, the conservatress of the integrity and the independence of art.

Afterwards, the physiognomy of the boulevard became almost disfigured; its bright and refined side has disappeared; it is only now the *passage de l'Europe*. People show themselves there full

of business, preoccupied with different ideas and aims; every one is running to some appointment in an opposite direction; salutations and shakings of the hand are finished in haste, a few ideas are exchanged in the nearest café; but people no longer show themselves simply for the sake of fashion, nay, the very art of lounging is lost; Albion has ceded to us its odious device: *time is monney.*

Winter in Paris was no less noisy than the fine days; *fêtes* repeated themselves in all directions with a new elegance, an activity, a charm, which made of them truly reunions of pleasure and not receptions of ceremony and show. Drawing-rooms were open in all societies of the nobility and of the higher city folk; the Court balls had a prestige of luxury and great elegance. In the midst of these immense reunions, in the splendid rooms of the Tuileries, women and diamonds strove together in magnificence. The aspect of the suppers which terminated these galas was above all dazzling; around an immense table, resplendent with gold, crystals, and delicate viands, was to be seen, as it were, a river of women and precious stones. The men, to enjoy this view, placed themselves willingly in the boxes which surrounded the hall of the theatre where the supper was given. Thence they admired at

leisure that chain of young and pretty naked arms, those robes of quilted satin, Pekin, Indian silk, or Pompadour, those gauzes and light tissues which set off the splendour of the shoulders. They understood that Lord Byron was wrong in casting an anathema upon women who eat, and that the majority of them lose nothing of attraction by carrying a pretty delicacy or a glass of crystal to their lips. To the supper of the ladies succeeded that of the gentlemen, and then they returned to dancing, or more frequently retired in groups by degrees before the dawn fully illumined the court of the Carrousel.

Madame d'Apony gave many receptions. Her *fêtes* were superb, and she excelled in doing the honours of a *soirée* in a gracious manner. She loved to give an impulse to pleasure, and society owed her no less gratitude than homage. The young Duke d'Orléans was always present at her balls; he carried thither, under his uniform, the grace of his twenty years and his polite manners, tender and respectful towards women. To Madame d'Apony came the *élite* of *fashionability* and of literature; Lamartine, Alfred de Musset, Eugène Sue, Balzac, met in her princely saloons, in the midst of diamonds, of bosoms resplendent with precious stones and with garlands of rose-pearls.

Dances were also given by the Duchesses Decazes, de Raguse, de Liancourt, de Maillé, d'Albuféra, de Guise, d'Otrante, and de Noailles,

by Madames de Flahaut, de Massa, de Matry, by the Princesses de Léon, de Beauffremont, and by the Countesses de Lariboisière and de Châtenay. Balls succeeded one another with incredible profusion. In the centre of the town, in the faubourgs, it was nothing but *fêtes* and diversions: Paris had no longer repose; by night all was brilliant illumination, muffled noises of carriages and orchestras; only one dearth seemed to be apprehended—that of musicians.

During the Carnival the *élite* of the capital was present on Opera-nights in that beautiful hall, lighted by sixty lustres charged with wax candles, which reflected themselves in the crystal which served them for network. The boxes, the galleries, decorated with festoons, with gauze, with gold and with silver, the walls covered with glasses, offered to the spectators a moving tableau, a fantastic *fête*, full of colour and originality. Spanish dancers were to be seen there who executed the *bolero*, the *zapateado*, with a vigour and softness at the same time quite surprising. By way of opposition there were gracious *Cinderella* dances, executed by the ladies of the Opera; then was furnished the signal of the famous quadrille of French fashions from Francis I. up to the present time. It was a piquant sight that reunion of costumes which have succeeded

one another in France for more than three centuries. The fashion of 1833 appeared not very unhandsome by the side of that of Francis I., which it resembled in more respects than one. All this defile, this living panorama of the past, vanished at last; the ball commenced; the hall and the scene were united. Then followed a general *raoût*, in which intrigues, mysterious conversations, succeeded one another without interruption till the first glimpse of day.

The dress of men at these Opera-balls was severe; almost all adopted the black costume of the ball; the greater number wore silk stockings, black or brown; some who had adopted the tight-fitting pantaloon had square gold buckles on their shoes. Among the women, dominoes were in an immense majority, white dominoes, blue dominoes, rose dominoes, above all black dominoes. Many spectatresses in the boxes wore no hood; they had head-dresses of marabouts or garlands of leaves and flowers; dominoes with a broad band of tulle, embroidered or plain; some eccentrics had replaced the domino by a species of *simarres* open in front in quilted or in Persian satin.

The youth of the schools had little by little revolutionised French dancing in the reunions of the *Grande Chaumière;* for the elegant movements, slowly developed, of the exquisite gavotte of our fathers, they had substituted a frenzied step, epileptic, sometimes indecent, baptized by

the name of *chahut.* From the Quartier Latin this wild and lively dance had spread itself among the people and even amongst the dandies; it was seen flourishing at the Opera, and especially at the balls of the Variétés.

In the first years of the reign of Louis-Philippe the Opera-balls were frequented by the best company, and all passed off in a decent and courteous manner. Strangers admired the taste of these *fêtes,* the grace and *bon ton* of the Parisian women; astonished even that, in such confusion, in so prodigious a crush, that great equality which denoted the character of the nation could be appreciated. It was only in 1835 that the Opera-balls degenerated into manifestations of license. A very rich lord, Lord Seymour, who was vaunted for his prodigalities on the boulevards, where he cast to the crowd gold in handfuls, sweatmeats, and insensate claptrap, *Milord l'Arsouille*—such was his popular surname—brought suddenly into Paris, like a wind, drunken follies and orgies full of disorder. In 1836 satirical masquerades of Louis-Philippe were organised, of his ministers and of his magistrates; the railing instinct of the crowd was aroused. During the whole of the Carnival, Lord Seymour, a dandy who might have been a market-porter, held his headquarters at the *Vendanges de Bourgogne;* it was there that the army of folly took its watchwords. The masks, male and female, upon whom he prodigally bestowed

his crowns and his cuffs, gave themselves at his order to wild dances, to banquets, to the grossest bacchanalian festivities. Then were to be seen those famous *Descentes de la Courtille*, those hordes of ragged masks who dashed upon the town, those vagabonds, those lumpers, those merry-andrews, those charlatans, who from the top of their cars harangued the crowd, and made of the boulevard a succursale of the most billowy days of the Carnival in the Roman Corso.

This need of distraction, of drowning sadness, of shaking all the bells of folly, was also found in the rustic balls of Paris and its suburbs. After the cholera of 1832, which burst out on the day of Mid-Lent and made so many victims, people gave themselves up to pleasure with an anacreontic philosophy; they danced at *Tivoli*, which was then in existence, at the *Hermitage*, at the *Élysée-Montmartre*, at the *Montagnes-françaises*, at the *Grande Chaumière*, that paradise of students, where all political and sensuous passions bubbled and fermented, where one divined, above all, the latent germ of all the revolutions.

The student for the most part confined his pleasures to the *Grande Chaumière*; there he found leafy shades, women, and flowers. The cars rolled without ceasing at the *Montagnes-suisses*, as at the *Montagnes-françaises*. He might ride on horses and donkeys of wood; he might, above all, make love there to those

sentimental grisettes, those *Mimi Pinsons* who are still spoken of as types of grace itself, of gaiety, and the most pure disinterestedness, who, in sober fact, were not worth one sou more than the little *Musettes* of the present day.

Now if we mount a *cuckoo* at the Place de la Concorde some fine summer evening, we shall arrive at the Park of St. Cloud, where we shall find a ball which might bravely defy all the rest. "In no part," wrote Auguste Luchet in the *Nouveau Tableau de Paris au XIX^e^ Siècle*, "could you have found so much elegance and wealth. All that the court and the embassies, all that the châteaux and pleasure-houses of the magnificent valley possessed of pretty women and fashionable cavaliers held there faithful rendezvous between nine and ten o'clock in the evening. It was a perfume of nobility, which spread itself far and wide; it was an imposing and haughty crowd, in despite of its efforts to appear amiable and gentle, to frighten nobody, and obligingly put itself at the level of the common world. When the last public conveyance had gone, when there was no longer any fear of derogating too much, of any monstrous misalliance, the noble crowd began to stir itself then, and danced like a tradesman's wife on the hard ground, under a roof of chestnut trees lit by red lamps, to the sound of the music of the tea-gardens. A woman, then known only as the most amiable of

women — a woman, the soul of pleasure, the queen of the Court *fêtes*, the Duchess of Berry, in fine, presided over the pompous quadrilles. Her joyous, animated presence chased away etiquette, rumpled the diplomatic cravats, brought by force smiles on physiognomies till then impassive. Yielding to that swaying impulse, the courtly multitude cast its pride to the ground, and panted to follow the Duchess. Happy, then, the obscure young men who, braving the risk of a return on foot, or no return at all, had dared to attempt the competition of that end of the ball with the Life Guards. What fine stories to recount on the morrow! What pleasure to search for and guess at in the Royal Almanac the name and habitation of their unknown partners!"

We will not speak save by way of memorandum of the balls of Ranelagh, of Auteuil, of Bellevue, of Sceaux, and of the ball of La Tourelle at the Bois de Vincennes, where young women, young girls, grizzled personages, smooth adolescents, hirsute bachelors, of all classes and of every rank, danced pell-mell by an instinctive need, or rather to do as the rest of the world, after the fashion of the sheep of Panurge.

The great and incomparable day of the coquettes, of women of elegance and fashion, was Longchamps—Longchamps, with its triple rows

of conveyances bordering the boulevards from the Fountain of the Elephant to Porte Maillot, with its groups of cavaliers, its types of the fashionables of the day, coming, going, crossing, and caracolling around the barouches, in the depth of which were perceived feathers, flowers, and women's smiles. This day was the grand review of Fashion, and all her army was on foot; it was the favourite *fête* of men of elegance, of the curious, of the idle. Some went to Longchamps to get their gracious toilets admired, their pretty equipages, and their dashing horses; others to criticise the happy ones of the moment and to slander their neighbours, an occupation much affected in every time, and very edifying in the season of Lent and during the Holy Week.

Longchamps had remained the rendezvous of all the vanities, of all the pretended celebrities and notabilities of the moment. Over the carriage-way rolled in brilliant equipages with four horses the opulent seigneurs of the new or old nobility, the nobodies proud of their riches, the magistrates vain of their functions, the courtiers infatuated by their ephemeral favour, the brilliant military heroes, smart, coquettish, blustering, but pinched in their fine staff uniforms.

On the other side of this new Appian Way advanced slowly barouches, broughams, landaus, berlins. Some of these carriages were filled with women, young, pretty, adorned, desirous to please,

intoxicated with praises, and scarcely casting a look on the crowd of pedestrians who stopped to admire them ; others enclosed young married couples with pretty children with fresh and laughing faces ; finally, in the tilbury, in the stanhope, or in the tandem were seen fashionables, dandies, men of fashion and lady-killers, a glass at their eye, a camellia in their button-hole, proud if a coquette had deigned to take a place beside them in one of those fragile and dangerous carriages. Amidst these rows of vehicles numerous cavalcades passed galloping, letting nothing be seen in a flight of thin dust but a red or chestnut habit, the shine of a spur, the glister of harness, or the golden knob of a riding-whip.

The spectators, seated modestly on the sides of the route, watched filing by all these celebrities, all these ambitions, all this luxury, all this ostentation of riches. Often from this crowd, a seated popular magistracy, rose a voice which recounted without winding the origin of such or such an one of these new fortunes, so rapid and so extraordinary, and the good folks consoled themselves by posing simply as curious spectators before that human masquerade, so sadly composed of luxury, of misery, of pride, of dust and of mud, of envy and of plaints, of baseness and of villainy.

The crowd went to and fro, crawling behind the row of chairs ; you recognised in that crush the tailor or seamstress, the milliner, the ready-

made linen-seller or the embroideress, the boot-maker, and the chamber-woman; quite a little world, adorned and in its Sunday best, which came to judge of the effect of habits, hats, dresses, ribbons, freshly departed from their habile and ingenious hands.

A few numbered hackney-coaches, almost ashamed of themselves, circulated in that immense crowd which debouched from all sides of Paris—a crowd full of laughter, zealous of pleasing, mocking, or approving, which saluted in passing the pediment of the Madeleine and the obelisk which Luxor had just sent us. During three days Longchamps triumphed; people went no more, as formerly, in pilgrimage to the antique abbey which had given its name to that consecrated promenade. They stopped at the Bois, and got rid one after another of their equipages, amidst which was particularly remarkable the eternal Guadalquivir green carriage of M. Aguado, all sown with the coronets of a marquis, laden with chased silver and decorated with glasses, a sort of *ex voto* cage which might have figured in a procession. There also were the two equipages of M. Schickler, the first consisting of a barouche drawn by four magnificent bay horses, mounted by jockeys whose livery sparkled with gold embroidery; the second a sumptuous berlin, of which the lackeys wore a full white livery. Nothing was wanting to the splendours of that

exhibition, not even the pretty rose and silver equipage of *Justine*, so well described by Louvet in the Longchamps of *Faublas;* only it was not then the waiting-maid of the Marchioness of B—— who was seen in that marvellous conveyance, and the carriage had neither the old-fashioned form of a sea-shell nor the tender colours of the last century; it was some young actress, of whom it was the fashion to admire under a broad-brimmed hat the roguish head with its tufts of hair *à la Kléber* which fell deliciously over the ears and on to the neck, and gave her an air of frenzied romance.

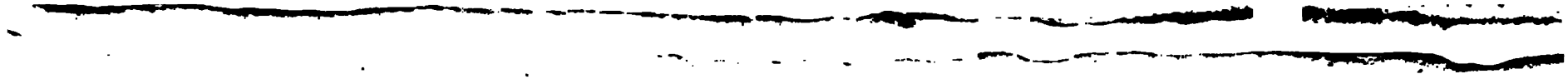
Nothing was heard on all sides but the names of *Victorine*, of *Burty*, of *Gagelin*, of *Palmyre*, of *Madame Saint-Laurent* and *Herbaut*, the renowned milliners and seamstresses; then in the conversation of the women one caught such terms as cashmere-challises, crepons of Hindustan, cambrics of the Mogol, muslins of Golconda, gauzes of Memphis, agate of China, tissues of Sandomir, handkerchiefs of Lyons, wools of Thibet—a whole geography of fashion, which, too, had its *orientales*. An enumeration was made of the prettiest spring samples and of new stuffs; good taste and supreme elegance were discussed. Longchamps was the grand moving bazaar whither every fair Parisian went to conceive and dream of her approaching toilets.

Little by little, dating from 1835, Longchamps,

though gaining in a moral point of view, lost much of its aspect of sumptuousness; it doffed the purple to variegate itself with the thousand hues of society; fashions mixed there no less than ranks. The citizen's joy, clothed in tarlatane, elbowed rich embroidered stuffs; one half the feminine refugees, under the incognito of their undress, came only to observe the other half; the pomp and speciality of this promenade of show sensibly weakened, and it was permissible to appear there without elegant or new toilets. Longchamps was at last definitely dethroned by the Courses.

Fashion would be no more fashionable if it did not change many times in a century even the mode of its manifestations.

# LIONESSES AND FASHIONABLES.



## *LIONESSES AND FASHIONABLES.*

EVERY woman of fashion in 1842, at the time when Frédéric Soulié published *Le Lion Amoureux* and Charles de Bernard *La Peau de Lion*, was newly baptized by the dandies, who appeared to go to the Jardin du Roi for their models of bearing and elegance ; it was nothing but *Lionesses, Panthers, Tigers,* and *Rats;* one might for an instant suppose oneself in a fashionable menagerie, such amiable complaisance was shown by our *Merveilleux* in the employment of these different expressions.

A *Physiology of the Lion* became necessary; it very soon appeared under the signature of Félix Deriège, with designs by Gavarni and Daumier.

The author, in an introduction in biblical style, initiates us in the most ingenious manner in the world into the genesis of the savage king of the new Fashion.

"In the beginning," says he, "a crowd of charming creatures adorned the diverse countries of the elegant world.

"And Fashion saw that a king was wanting to all these beings which her caprice had formed.

"And she said:

"Let us make the Lion in our image after our likeness!

"Let him have dominion over the Boulevard!

"Let the Opera become his conquest!

"Let him command in all places, from the Faubourg Montmartre to the Faubourg Saint-Honoré.

"And the Lion appeared.

"Then he assembled his subjects around him, and gave to every one his name in the fashionable tongue.

"He called some of them *Lionesses*—these were feminine beings, richly married, coquettes, pretty, who managed perfectly the pistol and the riding-whip, rode on horseback like lancers, prized highly the cigarette, and disdained not iced champagne.

"A gigantic chasseur was wont to accompany them to prevent dangerous quarrels between *lions* and *lionesses*, in showing the hooks of his moustaches to avoid the shedding of blood.

"Others of his subjects he named *panthers*. These ferocious Andalusians, of disordered mien, of fiery eye, make themselves remarkable by the luxurious display of their head-dress, the exaggeration of their crinolines, and seek incessantly upon the asphalte an equipage to conquer and a heart to devour.

"Some there were to whom he gave the denomination of *tigers*, without their having eaten a soul (*les grooms*); on the contrary, obedience, submission is their first virtue; their hat with a black cockade, their top-boots, their blue jacket, and their variegated waistcoat cover little blackguards snatched from the pleasures of *chuck-farthing*.

"Others, lastly, received the name of *rats;* gnawing sylphs of a nature extremely voracious, yet supple, seductive, capricious, who let fall the heaven of the Opera upon the asphalt of the boulevard.

"And Fashion saw that her work was good."

Many species of lionesses were to be remarked: the *lioness of fashion*, the *lioness of politics*, and the *lioness of letters;* all had the same origin. Alfred de Musset was the veritable nominal godfather of the Lioness, and George Sand might be

called her godmother, the moral instigatress of that new series of singular women who showed all the audacities, all the eccentricities imaginable: the former, with his famous song, *Avez-vous vu dans Barcelone, C'est ma maîtresse ma lionne*, baptized that multitude of savage little creatures, fiery, untameable, which the romantic reaction had created; the latter, by her romances of revolution, such as *Valentine, Indiana, Lélia*, and others, put into the heart of all these pretended victims of love ideas of revindication, of independence, of virility, which made but too masculine those pretty petticoated demons. The Lioness was thus the predecessoress of the *Vésuvienne*, who played in the *Republic of women* some years later a *rôle* of anarchist anandryne most curious to study, from whose *Chant du départ* here follows a couplet:

O daughters of Vesuvius, march, march, for slaves are we,
And save us with your chivalry!
And do the deed they never dared in 1793;
Suppress our husbands all by a bran-new decree!
Oh, let a cruel vengeance shock,
Unheard of all the human kind!
Cut! and the man to-night a cock,
To-morrow let us capon find!

The woman of 1830 had been sentimental as a sensitive plant; her imagination, exalted by the romances of Walter Scott and the poems of Lord Byron, dreamed of nothing but devotion, sacrifices, griefs, infinite tendernesses. Her heart

and spirit were exalted in the blackest fictions, and all her æsthetics consisted in appearing pale, diminished by a mute suffering, immaterial and diaphanous; she bent as a flexible reed to the breath of love, she accepted the lot which made of her a soul misunderstood; but revolt entered not into her senses; she withered sweetly as a delicate flower bruised upon its stalk, awaiting hardly a dewdrop of happiness to revive it; she remained in torpors without end, in languishings without cause, which appeared to her exquisite.

The Lioness was the reaction against this anæmia of the consumptive; she showed herself roaring, defiant, bounding; she tossed her mane, jutted out her claws and her chest, and with the free exercise of her muscles, the feeling of her force, launched herself into the Parisian arena. She knew how to ride in Arab fashion on horseback, to tipple down burning punch and iced champagne, to manipulate the riding whip, to draw the sword, to fire the pistol, to smoke a cigar without having vapours, to pull an oar in case of necessity; this was the terrible child of fashion, and in all the *signals to saddle* of life she was to be seen alert, dashing, intrepid, never losing her stirrups.

The Lioness, whilst pretending to a share of power, sought not its unlimited franchises save in the different exercises of fashionable life; she knew how to remain woman unbooted and to

take off her spurs in honour of her favourites. She allied very easily sport, the turf, pleasure and elegance, and made up her reading out of the *Journal des Haras*, the *Journal des Chasseurs*, and the *Petit Courrier des Dames*. She comprehended all the luxuries, all the delicacies and the comfortable of the interior. Let us ask now of Eugène Guinot to introduce us into a Lioness's cave.

"Behold us in a small hotel newly built at the extremity of the Chaussée-d'Antin. What a charming habitation! Admire the elegance of this flight of steps, this noble peristyle, these choice flowers, the verdure of these exotic shrubs, the grace of these statues. Few lionesses have a more beautiful cage . . . ; but let us make haste, the hostess has just awaked; she rings for her chamberwoman who aids her in her first morning toilet. Her apartments merit description. They are composed of four rooms furnished in medieval style. The bedroom is hung with blue damask, and provided with a canopied bed, a prie-Dieu, six arm-chairs and two magnificent chests, the whole of ebony admirably carved; Venetian glasses, a lustre and two candelabra in copper-gilt, vases and cups of silver chased with infinite art, and two pictures, a *Judith* of Paul Véronèse and a *Diana hunting* of André del Sarto, complete the furniture of this room. The drawing-room is overwhelmed with ornaments, furniture, paintings

of all sorts; it seems like a rich shop of *bric-à-brac.* What is especially remarkable in this mass of diverse objects is the arms which tapestry the walls: lances, swords, poignards, gauntlets, casques, hatchets, morions, coats of mail, a whole apparatus of battle, the equipment of a dozen knights. The boudoir and the bathing-room have the same Gothic, severe, and martial physiognomy. Nothing is stranger than the disorder of a pretty woman in the midst of these warlike insignia and these formidable relics of past time; a lace scarf suspended on the point of a lance, a new hat of rose satin hung on the pommel of a rapier, a parasol cast upon a buckler, tiny shoes yawning beneath enormous cuissards of a captain of lansquenets."[1]

The Lioness brings not into her costume the same sentiment of archaism as into her apartments; in the midst of her false Gothic splendours, an elegant romantic lady of 1830 would have appeared in a trailing dress *à la* Marguerite de Bourgogne, or well attired like the Châtelaine de Coucy; she would have hoisted the iron girdle and the trinkets of steel; but the fashionable of 1840 is more positive, though remaining less in local colour. On rising in the morning she places on her head a dress-cap of cambric with small

[1] *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes.* Paris, Curmer, 1841, t. ii.

bardes, bordered with valenciennes fluttering all about; for vestment, a dressing-gown of cashmere of light tint with high body and fan-shaped back. This dress, fastened from top to bottom by the aid of small frogs, large sleeves with Venetian style, open wide at the orifice; above, the coquette allows to be seen an Amazon chemise with an English collar, with small plaits forming a frill in front; on her feet she drags at her ease *nonchalantes* embroidered with a dazzling braid.

It is thus that she receives her people in the morning, her grooms, her footman, her saddler, her seamstresses and her modistes. With a little boyish air she disposes of everything like a gentleman, asks about her horses, verifies the accounts of her gunsmith, of her ready-made linen-seller, of her tailor, of her milliner, and of her bootmaker; she settles the bills of Verdier, of Humann, of Gagelin, of Lassalle, or of Salmon; she goes a few instants to her florist's, then passes into her boudoir to put on a second undress, somewhat more refined, for any female friends who may come to visit her.

The dress-cap on this occasion will be very small, composed of an alnage of Gothic laces, two butterflies extending themselves at the level of the cheeks and separating pods of gauze ruban. This fashion of caps is at that time universal; they are made on all shapes; they adapt themselves to all toilets, to all circum-

stances. She then puts on a peignoir with open skirt, in *foulard tissu* of a new kind, as remarkable by its strength and suppleness as by the badness of its hues; the back is gathered, folds are seen on the shoulder and on the girdle, which is fastened by the aid of a gold buckle. Above, a petticoat of Pekin with three festooned flounces at the side; on the hands laced mittens in moire. Then the Lioness receives her friends, and they sit down to table, while their husbands breakfast at the Café de Paris. The repast is copious and solid; our fashionables have long teeth: oysters, truffled capon, side dishes disappear as the merest trifles; the honour of the name must be sustained, and they must show the appetite of a lion and give themselves strength and energy to support the fatigues of the day. Meanwhile their claws remain not inactive, and their neighbours are lightly lacerated in these conversations to which we will listen with the ear of the physiologist Guinot:

"What news is there?" "None, or very little. We are in the dead season of scandal!" "Have you read Balzac's last romance?" "I never read romances." "Nor I." "Nor I." "Nor I." "The Viscount de L—— has then sold his grey horse?" "No, he has lost it at bouillotte, and it is the greatest luck he ever had in play!" "Why! to lose a horse which had cost him some five hundred pounds, is that what you call good luck?" "Five

hundred pounds, do you say! the horse cost him ten times that amount, and that is the reason that he has been a gainer by his loss. M. de L—— was ridiculously opinionated and excessively conceited about his horse; he was always offering and taking enormous bets about the beast; the horse always lost, but his defeats altered in no degree the good opinion which the Viscount had conceived of the ill-starred animal, so that this blindness of his has cost him some four or five thousand pounds in less than a year." "I did not think he was rich enough to support such evil fortune." "Did you hear Mario last Monday? he sang like an angel." "Another new ballet?" "It would be perfect if we had any male dancers; good male dancers are indispensable to a ballet, whatever our friends of the Jockey Club may say, who only want to see women at the Opera." "Has Madame B—— reappeared?" "No, it is a case of most tenacious despair; she regrets the time when women who had been abandoned used to go and weep at the Carmelites; but we have no longer convents dedicated to this custom, and it is a pity, for nothing is more embarrassing than a grief which we can only display at home." "Why doesn't she imitate Madame d'A——, who never wears mourning for an infidelity more than three days?" "Habit is so fruitful in consolations!" "By the by, talking of Madame d'A——, they say that young

Roland is completely ruined." "What will become of him?" "He will turn jockey." "It's a pity; he was excellent in a steeple-chase." "Hadn't he a horse killed under him?" "Yes, *Mustapha*, by Captain Kernok, died of a stroke of apoplexy in crossing the Bièvre in a steeple-chase." "Your husband? how is he? shall we see him to-day?" "I don't know, we have not met for four and twenty hours, and I have not called upon him out of consideration. . . . Armand is my best friend, a charming fellow, whom I love with all my soul, and would not vex for all the world; but, in fine, I am his wife, and that's enough to make us preserve our reciprocal freedom." "Yes, my pretty dear, you are right; your sentiments are irreproachable, and your breakfasts are like your sentiments . . .; what shall we do now?" "If you like, we will go and shoot pigeons at Tivoli, thence to the Bois; there is a special race, you know, between *Mariette* and *Léporello*." "Good, our saddle horses are waiting for us at the Porte d'Auteuil; we will have them in a barouche."

Thus the morning passes in an insipid and almost exclusive chatter about sport; of literature and of art not a traitor word. The fashionable Lioness appears to be ignorant that Victor Hugo has just entered the Academy, that Musset is publishing his poems, that Lamartine has taken refuge in politics, that Alphonse Karr is cultivating malicious *guêpes*, that Mérimée, Gozlan,

Théophile Gautier, Henri Heine, Alexandre Dumas, and Soulié are writing masterpieces of force, spirit, and style; she knows nothing of Eugène Sue save by the handkerchief *fleur de Marie* which the *Mysteries of Paris* have brought into fashion; she speaks of nothing but races and Anglomania. Perhaps, by way of affectation, she will hazard a few observations about Rachel's talent, insinuating at the same time that for her the true woman of genius is the incomparable Lola Montès, the eccentric adventuress whose name already re-echoed at Vienna, at Berlin, at Munich, and throughout all Europe.

Whilst her friends await her smoking a *cigarro de Papel*, the Lioness puts on a *London smoke-coloured* riding habit, furnished with small round bells for buttons and frogs; the body is half-open over the chest in order to allow the cambric chemisette with its frill to be seen; the sleeves, somewhat large, cover half the forearm and have a very high wrist, covered by a gauntlet of yellow leather—like those worn by cavaliers—fall back over the wrist without, however, completely concealing it. Beneath this costume she wears pantaloons with straps, and puts on some small boots furnished with silver spurs; on her head she fixes a large felt of beaver, kept in place by a chin-strap of silk, the form of which recalls the archbishop's hat.

And here are our Lioness and her friends at Tivoli; she alights from her *Clarence* or her *American*, raises her riding habit over her arm, and enters with deliberate step into the enclosure devoted to pigeon-shooting, in the midst of an assembly of dandies and of sportsmen, to whom she distributes virile good-days and grasps of the hands full of energy and cordiality, after the English fashion. She calls for a carbine, adjusts it easily, and whilst her *tiger* holds a second at her disposal, slaughters a pigeon; then two, then ten, then twenty in thirty shots, proud of her success and of the approving murmurs which she hears round about her. She remounts her carriage; at the gate of the Bois she bestrides a dashing horse, lifts her animal with the riding-whip and the spur, and arrives in a gallop with a remarkably good seat on her saddle on the race-course at the weighing-time, and takes a thousand bets on *Mariette* or *Léporello*, after learned discussions on the degree of training and the performance of the favourites.

The race is no sooner over than the Lioness is again on the gallop on her return to Paris, either to attend some fencing meeting—where she will have a very pretty bout, showing therein the delicacy and firmness of her play,—or to visit some nautical establishment, where she will take a header from the giraffe and show her science in strokes

in hand over hand, in swimming on her back, and all the graceful manifestations of natation.

The day of the Lioness is not yet at an end; she stretches herself out for a few minutes in her boudoir and has her evening toilet got ready: a dress of Oriental stuff with *Persian* or *Bedouin* sleeves; on her hair, arranged in wavy fillets which hide the ears and fall in coquettish curls upon the neck, she will place a Greek cap or lace curtains with a Bengal rose.

The dinner provided for the fashionable sportswoman is generally sumptuous and of good arrangement. As the guests are numerous, horses, *match*, and Barrière du Combat are less generally spoken of; the Lioness copes with the lion and drinks swaggeringly like the dragoons of Ver-vert. She is a stranger to no question of the world; she passes in review one by one, not without a spirit of criticism, all the beauties of the last ball of the civil list; she goes into ecstasies over the music executed at the concert of the Duke d'Orleans; she bestows prodigally all the gamut of her sympathies upon the talent of Virginie Déjazet, and all the notes of her admiration upon Fanny Elssler. The choir of lions furnishes her with a reply. By their looks, by their accents, by their smiles, it is clear that they find her divine, *pyramidal*, *delirium-causing*, and *colossal*. Then

the routs given to the English Embassy are talked of, the Count d'Orsay, the high elegance of the balls of Madame d'Apony, the Ministerial *soirées;* the *fête* of the Poles at the Hôtel Lambert and the Princess Czartoryska; M. de Rambuteau, the Countess Merlin, and their magnificent receptions. And during dessert there is a deal of conversation about the beautiful Madame Pradier and her dancing reunions, full of distinction and of charm, where, it seems—so say the ladies—all the literary and artistic summits of Paris are proud of being admitted.

At the hour of coffee, the leonine society pass into a little room with low seats, soft and convenient; the Lioness has borrowed the *comfort* from our neighbours across the water, and has applied it to all that surrounds her, service, furniture, and dress. In the smoking-saloons, where our diners find themselves reunited, there are no more those large sofas with their backs against the wall upon which the women of the Restoration ranged themselves in straight lines like little school-girls, almost chagrined at the obligation not to change their neighbours; nothing is to be seen now but *deux à deux, vis-à-vis* settees, excellent cushions, masterpieces of needlework, on which the company rest after having admired them. The carpets are thick, the rich portières show up the Gothic furniture, and it seems as if in those English porcelain cups of the house of Toy, the

coffee has a better taste, that on those deep divans the conversation is more easy, that those groups of faïence which support the wax candles, those burning perfumes disposed as tripods make life sweeter, fuller of repose, and aid in some sort the labour of digestion.

All this caressing luxury, this envelope of warm good living, sufficed not to keep the Lioness in her cage; she conducts her company to the Opera, to her box, to hear an act or two of *Comte Ory*. At her entrance all the opera-glasses turn upon her; there is as it were a ripple of heads in the orchestra-stalls; our fashionable has produced her effect. She places on the velvet border of her box her fan from Duvelleroy, her bouquet of camellias furnished by Constantin, her double-barrelled opera-glass of fine gold, her boxes of pastilles; she makes heard a light rustling of silk and velvet, and, comfortably settled, slightly leaning back, she begins, without troubling herself about the performance, to make her inspection of the house and the pit-tier. From time to time she gives a little sign discreetly, a coquettish gesture of the hand or a pretty smile of acquaintance; she complacently passes in review the toilets, finding here or there the talent of *Alexandrine* or of *Madame Séguin*, the good taste of *Brousse* or of *Palmyre*, the ability of *Madame Dasse*, or the English manner of *Mademoiselle Lenormand*. She remarks many representatives of fashion:

Lord and Lady Granville, the Princess de Beauffremont, MMes. Duchâtel and Rambuteau, the Princess Clementine, Madame de Plaisance, Madame Lehon, Madame Aguado, Madame Le Marrois, the Countess d'Osmont, &c. Women and diamonds sparkle in every box, there is the spectacle for her; whether Damoreau, Duprez, or Roger show themselves on the stage to her it is of no moment; all her attention is forestalled by the composition of certain boxes; she endeavours to divine intrigues, to fill up current anecdotes, to create gallant adventures. From time to time she throws herself back upon her seat, asking of one of her companions: *Do you know that person who is with Madame X——? What! Madame de Z——, always with the young Rubempré?* Or again: *Ah, my dear, the thing is inconceivable, just look at that old Marchioness of C—— scandalously simpering with that beardless young boy . . . she cannot wait for their mature formation.*

The Lioness remains but a little while at the Opera; she counts upon finishing the evening at the Faubourg Saint-Germain or at the Chausée-d'Antin at a ball or an intimate tea; she will stake a few pounds at bouillotte, will clear a side-board or take a copious lunch, and, about two o'clock in the morning, she will regain her hotel and go to bed without having found one hour to think, to dream, or to love. All her days will resemble one another; on the morrow she will go

on in exactly the same fashion, always active, bustling, physically overworked; she will dream of nothing but correctness, the *bon ton* of the day, the *New-fashioned;* her husband, her children will hold less place than her horses in her life; as to her heart, it is of solid *watch manufacture* with regular movements; neither lion nor dandy will retard or accelerate its movement.

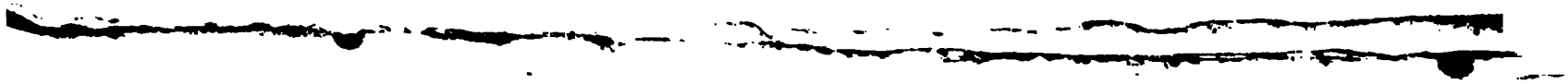
Love in 1840 is only met with among Bohemian students and the populace; it is to be found in the rustic parties so joyously described by Paul de Kock, but lions and lionesses admitted it not. The lion affected to be under the charm of his *panther*, of his *leopard*, or of his *rat;* the lioness rested satisfied in her sportive strength, and her heart was as well ordered as her stables could be; but she permitted no familiar feeding oneself from the rack.

# ECHOES OF BON TON

AND OF THE

## LIFE OF FASHION

IN 1850.



## *ECHOES OF BON TON AND OF THE LIFE OF FASHION IN 1850.*

MESDAMES the Parisians were all on a footing of war from the commencement of the year of grace 1850; the Prince President had substituted for his ordinary Thursday receptions veritable little dancing *fêtes*, for which Strauss and his orchestra had been ordered to the orangery of the Élysée. High spirits, youth, laughter were everywhere in these kinds of *redoubts* so little redoubtable, where people quoted among the queens of elegance the Princesses Mathilde and Caroline Murat, the Marchioness

of Castelbajac, ambassadress to St. Petersburg, Madame de Polignac, Mademoiselle de Lovenheim, the Baroness Pasquier, the Countess Regnault de Saint-Jean d'Angely, and a hundred other charming women who took pleasure in rivalling one another in graces, and in fencing matches of toilets and of diamonds, of garlands and of flowers.

Never were seen more naked shoulders than at this hour which marked the middle of the century, never perhaps more fresh or more white complexions of women shone under the flame of the lustres. All Paris danced and was now nothing more than a grand ball; the journals of fashion present us only with evening dresses and magnificent toilets; blond, moire antique, rose and blue crape, satin and velvet are put to contribution by all the dressmakers of the capital to create master-works of a charm not to be forgotten.

With her hair crisped or with virgin frontlets, armed with branches of bindweed or garlands of foliage, and roses rolled amidst the hair like Roman fillets, or again coifed with blond or lace, with a small delicate cap coquettishly ribboned, light as a breath of morning, the Frenchwoman of 1850 appears to us as an exquisite creature, with fine, long, and delicate form, like those statues of Pradier which personify her. One imagines her sweetly dreaming in this romantic sunset of art

and romance, of which the last rays settle upon her large luminous forehead with, as it were, a mysterious languor in the caress of her regard. One finds in the *Bernerette* the "fair angel" of the poet, the *Métella*, set in relief by the Baroness Dudevant, the enveloping muse, in short, of that admirable legion of artists and literary men who then flourished in France as in a veritable Athenian republic.

It is felt that the *distingué*, the *comme il faut*, are qualifications which have taken, if not their birth, at least all their real force of expression from the social spirit of that happy epoch; all breathes there of harmony, of correctness, of *bon ton*; in the general attitude of persons and things all aspires to refine itself by the most charming distinction.

The last Lionesses had been carried away by the storm of '48: the fine days of sport were past; horses only ran at races; Chantilly was almost a desert, and the Hippodrome of the Croix de Berny numbered no more its faithful frequenters. In the Republic of fashion—people no longer spoke of the Empire of fashion—two schools still contested, which Madame de Girardin has described in the *Vicomte de Launay*:[1] the flashy school and the mysterious school. The former

[1] *Le Vicomte de Launay.* "Parisian Letters," by Madame Émile de Girardin. Paris, M. Lévy, tome iv.

aimed only at attracting and dazzling the looks; the latter strove to captivate and interest the attention. The *flashy* were recognised by their proudly giddy demeanour: they wore their feathers in tufts and diamonds as a diadem; the *mysterious* were revealed by an attitude nobly reserved: they wore their feathers as weeping willows, and their diamonds to conceal their combs suffocated between two mats of hair, or again in long falling chains, lost amidst the folds of the dress. The former wished to produce an effect with frankness and confidence; the latter seemed to seek obscurity in order to induce people to come and look for them. The *rôle* of the one was little complicated: it consisted in the choice of extraordinary things which nobody wore; the game of the other was more difficult and called for more tact: their object was to wear what nobody had yet dared to wear, and yet to appear as simple in attire as the generality of women.

Some dressmakers had found the secret of contenting equally these contrary ambitions and of assisting these rival authorities in a common patronage. The mysterious school found in the stock of these ladies the chilly and chaste vestment which suited their character; sometimes it was a little mantle of black velvet, bordered with a modest lace; but the velvet was magnificent, and the modest lace showed prodigious labour, and the cut of the mantle was in the best taste, and be-

trayed the hand of the master; the advantage of this simplicity in the beautiful was to be always becoming. Hidden by such a mantle, a woman might visit both the rich and the poor. This hypocritical elegance of false luxury could not offend any save envious connoisseurs; this mantle was a veritable mantle of the heroine of romance; it was not the colour of the wall, but it preserved, as it were, a sweet perfume of distinction and incognito.

The flashy school found with these same tailoresses other vestments which suited their enterprises; there was still the same small mantle, but trimmed with seventy yards of lace, suitable only to days of triumph, on which all the veils of a tip-top coquetry were turned out.

The sect of the mysterious, according to Delphine Gay, had artistic pretensions, and chose for its models the most celebrated painters. "Thus," says the worthy author of the *Lettres parisiennes*, "that noble and severe coiffure which was so much admired at the last reception of the ambassadors, that hat of garnered velvet adorned with white plumes, which the English ambassadress wore, was copied from a portrait by Rubens. All the world spoke, too, of the beautiful coiffure of Madame de M——, a light veil graciously draped on the top of the head. Everybody said: 'What excellent good taste! how distinguished! how new!' New! it is the coiffure of

the *Vierge aux raisins*, exactly copied; a rain of gold and silver fallen upon that chaste veil alone has changed the divine coiffure into a mundane ornament. And that pretty little cap of Madame de V——, in white tulle, adorned with white bouquets, on which is coquettishly cast that black lace handkerchief knotted under the chin; it is not Raphael, but it is surely Chardin, Lancret, or Watteau, one of those rococo Raphaels of the pleasant days of the Regency, unless indeed it has been composed after some porcelain shepherdess, which would be still more classical."

The elegants of the flashy school protected certain dressmakers, who placed, with a superior taste, their imagination at the service of an affected erudition: these women artists took a lofty flight; they studied painting and drank of the inspiration of tragic literature, dramatic and melodramatic. They were always to be seen on the first nights, and never failed to attend the exhibitions of the Academy of Painting. Their Turkish or Greek bodies, their Polish jackets, their Chinese tunics, their Hungarian dolmans, their Russian riding-habits were all inspired by serious documents, and out of so many foreign fashions they made up a delicious French fashion in which nothing shocked, so deftly melted were the colours and so soberly managed were festoons and laces. It was sometimes eccentric, audacious, but always pretty. It is one of these dressmakers

who made for the marriage of the Queen of Spain a wedding garment adorned with a dozen crowns, representing the twelve provinces of Spain. Palmyre lived yet in reputation, and many ladies of elegance professed respect for her art and her style. Flashy and Mysterious both studied in her school, but the queen of dressmakers in 1830 no longer reigned *de facto*; there had been formed after her and her example a quantity of rival houses who filled the journals of fashion with their advertisements and their exploits. Amongst them the most celebrated were Mademoiselle Félicie, Madame Baudrant, Madame Quillet, all expert heiresses of the flourishing empire of Palmyre and of Alexandria.

Parisian society in 1850 was given up to pleasures, balls, receptions, and theatres, with so much fascination that nobody could have supposed that a revolution had lately changed radically the form of government. Nothing was heard spoken of but balls and brilliant *soirées*, balls at the house of the President of the Assembly, *soirées* given by the Prince President of the Republic, balls at the Turkish Embassy, balls at the bankers', balls in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, balls at the Hôtel de Ville, balls for the good of the poor, without counting the balls of the actresses, which had become fashionable, with which neither the

aristocracy, nor politics, nor finance, nor the administration could enter into competition. They caused a madness, a fever, a delirium; the *elegants* left not a means untried to secure an invitation to these routs. The women of fashion, exasperated by the theatrical tendencies of a part of their society, ventured even to propose the creation of an association to put an interdict upon those gentlemen who had been present at any actress's ball. This association even included a great number of signatures of the best people of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, of the Faubourg Saint-Honoré, and of the Chaussée-d'Antin; but no vexatious measure was taken against the delinquents.

Mademoiselle Alice Ozy had inaugurated the era of these actresses' *soirées;* after her came Madame Octave of the Vaudeville, then Mademoiselle Fuoco, the dancer at the Opera. Little by little the fashion took hold of all the theatres. MMes. Doche, Renaud, Mademoiselles Cerrito and Plunkett were among the number of the most determined dancers. The celebrated Atala Bilboquet, a mountebank's widow, gave on the evening of the day of mid-Lent a grand rout to which none were admitted save in short breeches and in shoes with buckles. This simple fancy almost succeeded in dethroning pantaloons; our dandies, our financiers, our diplomatists, our artists, and our men of letters were ravished at donning

again those breeches proscribed for so long and now returned to honour. Never had the theatres been better attended and by more fashionable a society. In the year 1850 was represented the *Charlotte Corday* of Ponsard, the *Queue du chien d'Alcibiade* of Gozlan, the *Chandelier* of Alfred de Musset, the *Amoureux sans le savoir* of Jules Barbier and Michel Carré, *les Contes de la reine de Navarre*, by Scribe and Legouvé; *Horace et Lydie*, by Ponsart; the *Carrosse du Saint-Sacrement*, by Mérimée; and a number of other pieces by Viennet, Monrose, Plouvier, &c. The Comédie-Française, which had at its head Arsène-Houssaye, shone with a surprising splendour long since forgotten.

Fashion returned by degrees to the Théâtre-Italien, where all the *elegants* met to applaud Madame Sontag, Colini, Gardoni, and other singers no less celebrated. The Opera was flourishing, and all the other theatres of the capital were crowded with spectators greedy of the dramas and vaudevilles. There was no conversation more current in the social world than that which took for its text comedy and actors. To speak of a new piece, of a woman, a dancer, a singer of reputation, seemed a matter of facile eloquence, and after the usual conversation about the rain and the fine weather this subject was always broached in drawing-rooms. People spoke of the Fiorentini in *Norma*, of Duprez in

*William Tell*, of Samson and of Geffroy in the *Mariage de Figaro*, of Madame Allan and of Bressant in the *Misanthrope*, of Frédérick Lemâitre, of Rose Chéri, and of Lesueur, of Mélingue and of Madame Guyon, and finally of the funambulist clown Paul Legrand.

The theatre seemed to have bitten people of fashion in that sensible part—vanity. "Every drawing-room is a theatre," says Auguste Villemot in one of his witty chronicles; "every screen a wing; every father-in-law a prompter. This elegant amateur acting greatly amuses the women. In the first place bustle is not *ennui*, that is always something gained; and then, in the comedy of society, there are always a thousand combinations, in which the heart, or self-love, find their account. There is all the business of rehearsals, the declarations authorised by the brochure, the pressure of the hand, the compliments addressed to the *dramatis personæ*, of which the comic artist makes her profit; there are, in short, on the day of representation, toilets full of fantasy, a laughing part if you have good teeth, a smiling part only in the contrary possibility; in fact, all the evolutions of beauty contrived by grace and coquetry. I have heard," pursues Villemot, "of a woman of the very highest fashion very much prouder of her opulent light hair than of her ancestors. The dream of this woman is to represent Eve. She is seeking for a Paradise Lost in prose

or in verse, and she knocks at the door of all the poets to procure it. A young and celebrated writer willingly consents to take the work in hand, but he would like to play the part of the serpent which is already distributed. Meantime the lady plays every kind of part, so long as there is a fainting in it; on this occasion her hair undoes itself quite naturally, and the effect is produced."

The Carnival expired to the noise of the orchestras; but from the first days of Lent society seemed to reflect, and the elegances of Paris were divided between the preachers and worldly vanities. Pulpit orators entered into biblical campaigns against the frenzies of feminine luxury and the prevailing lightness of manners; sacred literature furnished striking images, bold metaphors, against the fashions, swollen with iniquity, referring probably to the nascent crinolines, as yet gracious enough and in no way cumbersome. The fair women of this world received these torrents of eloquence with marked fervour and considerable compunction, promising to amend and to refrain from their unquestionable luxuriousness; they dreamed indeed of becoming simple and decent in fine calico or modest book-muslin; but from Good Friday, the echo of the old Longchamps—which existed now only in memory—revived in them once more the inveterate passion of dress and fashion.

Let us see now what were the caprices and fantasies of fashion at this date, which is, as it were, the exact meridian of the century.

The Revolution of '48 had not brought any notable variations into costume in general; at most one saw after the days of February some tricolour ribbons on dresses and on hats, besides many *Girondin mantles*, covered with three small coloured laces, made of muslin with festoon trimmings; but nothing eccentric appeared in the commencement of the second Republic. *Bon ton* was carried to simplicity, and the true elegants applied themselves to follow rigorously the fashions, taking great care in no case to exaggerate them.

It seemed necessary to a worldly coquette to have by her in the morning a pretty dressing-gown of cashmere lined with silk and wadded, with broad sleeves, above a polonaise separated from the dress, the under-sleeves of cambric or jaconet bordered by an insertion in English broidery, with a narrow flounce, embroidered in the same style, set high level with the insertion, and forming a kerchief with frilled front. Other dressing gowns were made of silk satin *à la reine*, damask, lined with quilted silk, with ornaments of lace, velvet galloon, or ribbon.

For morning out-of-door dress, visit or promenade, a redingote was worn of rich silk, damask, rep or gros de Tours, ribbed with green, black,

blue, chestnut ground, with garlands of flowers, These redingotes could be worn without trimmings, or could be adorned at will with ordinary or woollen lace.

As coiffures, the milliners fabricated many hoods of taffety covered with smooth crape, others of taffety adorned with silk blond; some, and not the least pretty, were wholly covered with taffety in large grooves placed in a stream in front, the border adorned by a triple row of small silk blonds. Upon these hats they placed velvet flowers: forget-me-nots, auriculas, and primroses. As to caps, never perhaps were conceived more coquettish, lighter, more vapourish; they were of silk blonds twisted in spirals with bunches of flowers at the sides, circles of blond set on small garlands of rose convolvulus, of which the small branches fall behind in the hair, Mechlin enrolled with small cannons of ribbons, delicate coiffures of Brussels point or of Chantilly arranged with an incomparable taste and giving to women's physiognomies—thanks to the simplicity of their hair and costume—a little becoming air, piquant, eccentric, a something which reminded you at the same time of the grand lady and the waiting-maid. Leghorn hats were again called into vogue, adorned with ostrich feathers, marabouts, tulips, roses, lilies, lilies of the valley, or fine garlands of bindweed.

In the days of summer, women of the world

adopted dresses of barège according to their taste, or more simple dresses of fine calico, jaconet, and brillantine with a white ground and large Persian patterns. Small women, who feared to disappear under the amplitude of skirts trimmed with three flounces, wore only a single narrow flounce *à tête* terminating the skirt. Fresh dresses were seen of cotton muslin with white patterns on a rose ground, white canezous with skirts of taffety, redingotes of white quilting, shawls of China crape, white or coloured ground, broidered with patterns of all hues of very great richness, representing pagodas inhabited by fantastic birds, parterres of flowers, all the profusion of decorative ornaments of the Celestial Empire. As simple shawls women cast over their shoulders broad white tulles imitating valenciennes, lace or guipure, or shawls of black taffety with borders stitched with palms, recalling the Turkish embroideries and the silk-embroidered cashmeres.

Ball dresses chiefly occupied the imagination of the dressmakers. These dresses were very ample and trimmed below, so as to make them describe a very great circle; what was suppressed above was added below; their dresses, adorned with narrow lace flounces, were trimmed beneath with three or four puffs of tulle, and the narrow flounces were set above these; all the trimmings were so disposed as to make the skirts stick out. For half-toilets, low bodies cut square in front

became generally much esteemed by the elegants; these bodies lent themselves to numerous ornaments: lace, blond, puffs of gathered tulle, ribbons, gold or silver lace, and so on. An engraving shows us one of grey pearl damask, the front adorned with puffs of tulle, each crossed by a ribbon tied in the middle; the circumference of the dress was adorned by a blond framing the front of the body, surmounted near the cutting of the neck by a puff of tulle; the sleeves were bordered by two rows of blond and trimmed with the same puffs as the body. The journals of fashion for 1850 alone give more than 1800 different patterns of ball dresses. Opera cloaks lined with fur or quilted silk and bordered with furs were then in great use.

Coiffures *à la* Marie Stuart competed with the coiffures *à la* Valois, adopted by pretty women who made part of that *flashy* school of which we spoke above. In the coiffure *à la* Valois the hair was raised as if for the Chinese coiffure and tucked up with pads all round the forehead. Everywhere garlands of flowers were to be seen mingled with blond and mixed with the hair. There were, according to M. Challamel, many kinds of head-dresses: the Druid head-dress was composed of green oak; the Nereid head-dress comprehended all the flowers loved by the Naiads; the Leda head-dress was in little feathers of birds of Barbary; the Proserpine head-dress was made out of field

flowers, thus recalling Proserpine before her carrying off; the Ceres head-dress showed the ordinary attributes of the good goddess.

For jewels were worn large chains of big pearls, without a clasp, which, having made the tour of the neck, fell to the height of the girdle; also bracelets in marcasite, in enamel, in diamonds, in cameos; lastly, to set in relief the whiteness of the neck, velvet collars of about two fingers'-breadth were bound about it. Many jewels were in green enamel, in gold enamel and pearls, in blue oxidised silver. The pins of the caps, the brooches, had pendants of pearls or diamonds. As the fashion of *pagoda* sleeves had come back again, it was the custom to wear *brassards* of velvet, or ribbons of which the bows and knots entirely concealed the wrists. After this laborious nomenclature of different attires, let us breathe a little and then pass on.

Among the fashionable and worldly women were MMes. Wolowska, the Countess de Villars, MMes. Eugène Scribe, Victor Hugo, Anicet Bourgeois, Paillet, Achille Fould, the Countess Le Marrois, the Countess de Vergennes, the Marchioness de Las Marismas, MMes. de Crussol, de Vogué, de La Rochefoucauld, de Caraman, Decazes, Villeneuve—in fine, the majo-

rity of the future great ladies who shone under the second Empire.

In that happy year of 1850, over which we have cast surreptitiously a mere wink of the eye, nothing troubled the public serenity. People might give themselves up to pleasure without inquietude of any sort, without fear of the morrow; nothing was spoken of but the direction of the balloons, the projects of M. Petin, and of the aerial frigate "Éola," upon which a Spaniard, M. Montemayor, founded the greatest hopes. California and its mines of gold also troubled many heads. Many women dreamed of betaking themselves to San Francisco, their imagination making them see this new country as a fairy kingdom, where they might sail over rivers of diamonds or bury themselves in quarries of precious stones.

The year 1850 saw disappear the last eccentric dilettante to be seen in Paris—the poor Carnavale. After him no more were to be seen upon our boulevards originals otherwise clothed than in black, and walking more or less in the paths of the fashion. Carnavale was no ordinary dilettante; his costumes varied according to the time, according to the colour of his spirit, and following the representations of the Théâtre-Italien. He wore a yellow canary coat on the days when they played *Il Barbiere*, an apple-green jacket on the day of *Tancredi*, a redingote

on the days of *Semiramide*, and sky-blue on the days of *Lucia*. He showed himself with neck ribbons, floating wristbands, flowers and feathers in his hat—the whole through a pure spirit of dilettantism.

Carnavale, the friend of Malibran, of M. Lafitte, of Bellini, and of Napoleon III., ceased to gladden the sight of the frequenters of the Théâtre-Italien and the National Library. He was extinguished like a many-coloured lantern, like a last reflection of romanticism. At the date of 1850 the century seems, alas! definitively devoted to grey.

# PARISIAN WOMEN

UNDER THE

## SECOND EMPIRE.

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LOVE of moving, of travelling, of watering-places and of sea-baths, which, thanks to the applications of steam, penetrated so profoundly into the great world and the middle classes of France in the course of the second Empire, introduced into usages and even into manners a very appreciable variation and a curious indifference. The new facilities of life mixed somewhat all the social classes. The parvenus of yesterday triumphed and were received in all places; there was a contest of flashy pleasures and luxuries. Casinos, Kursals, ridottos,

temples of gambling and of dancing had on a sudden considerable vogue. At Spa, at Baden-Baden, were to be seen seated round the green cloth and roulette tables girls of the *demi-monde* and ladies of *bon ton*, who feared not to impress upon their noble quarterings a vertiginous *balancé* of the country of *can-can*.

The same epoch saw born at the same time the cocotte and the cocodette; the one a venal hetaïra, who filled Paris and the towns with joy at the display of her screaming elegance and her extravagances; the other a *blasée* woman of the world, who, affecting the bearing of a modern Phryne, hoisted the enormous chignon, the red carrot or cow's tail of the hair, paint, the tinsel of ornament, the jargon and the *gutter* bearing of the girls of marble and the *hinds* of renown.

The *petit crevé*, that vibrio of a tainted society, is of the same spontaneous generation. It is the reign of inelegance and of bad taste, which implanted itself in France during the ten last years of the Empire. Never in the course of the nineteenth century was equal defiance shown to the Beautiful, the Coquettish, to Grace. Those frightful crinolines, which turned women into balloons of yards of stuffs, those half-sleeves, broad and ungracious, that hair of a female savage, scarcely hidden under caps of velvet or hats with insane bands, the very hideousness of the stuffs and their howling hues, their medleys, their gold and

silver lace, all this seen at a distance produces before our eyes a sort of prodigious confusion which will doubtless become only more accentuated and perceptible in the next century, at the hour of the recapitulation of the fashions of this time. It would in fact be difficult to meet with tones of costumes more harsh, more contrary to the laws of harmony or colours than those which were in such great honour five and twenty years ago, of which we see even now too often frightful specimens hooked up in the shop-windows of tradeswomen of the toilet. How can we imagine *violets* so astounding, *roses* so little softened, *greens* more brutally raw, *chestnuts*, "cockchafer backs," more dirty, greys more dull, *yellow suns* more blinding? All this tonality, nevertheless, of the engravings of Épinal flourished; reds were invented, solferino, marengo, ox-blood, capable of causing congestion in all the bulls of Camargo or Andalusia.

The Empress Eugénie had become, immediately on ascending the throne, the arbitress of the variations of costume; from the day of her marriage at Notre-Dame, the 30th of January 1853, she imposed her taste upon France. The dress which she wore for the church ceremony was of plain white velvet made with a long train, the skirt entirely covered with narrow flounces of magnificent Alençon lace, the corsage *à basquines* was covered in front with spikes of diamonds set

as frogs. A veil of Alençon point fell over her shoulders and was attached to the top of the head by a small crown of orange flowers; a diadem of marvellous sapphires with the circumference of the comb made up a coiffure, and completed this toilet which caused such great excitement. The Empress then wore her hair raised in front, and that gracious manner which suited her face so well was, at the end of a few days, the coiffure generally in fashion; but it is just to say that it was very little becoming to very numerous feminine physiognomies.

During the first years of the Empire fashion rested very much what it was in 1850: skirts became more puffed, corsages were made *à la* Vierge, there were corsages Pompadour, corsages Watteau with trimmings of lace, of velvet, of flowers, of ruché ribbonds, fluttering butterfly fashion, which were extremely gracious. The colour of stuffs varied to infinity; among the most celebrated was the shade *Téba* and the aventurine yellow; for full dress, robes were made of rose and blue moire antique, with basques trimmed with fringes and lace or white feathers; the waists were a little shortened, but feminine costumes still remained elegant. The coiffures, hoods, caps, or straw hats harmonised with the whole of these toilets without too much fulness or encumbrance; one might think people were rather returning little by little to the fashions of the Con-

sulate than to the panniers of the reign of Louis XVI., when, in the second period of the reign of Napoleon III., the frightful crinoline appeared, or rather accentuated itself, to the great astonishment of all the Frenchwomen who felt the ridicule of this incredible fashion.

"Incessant criticisms attacked the crinoline," says M. A. Challamel in his *Histoire de la mode*; "it was found that there were several other means of sustaining the narrow flounces. Might not starched petticoats be adopted, petticoats with narrow flounces, three-storied petticoats in coarse calico? Horse-hair had not even the sovereign virtue of swelling out the habiliments.

"In spite of its enemies, or perhaps because of its enemies, crinoline was not long in reigning as absolute mistress. A number of women, after having raved against these horrible crinolines, accepted the starched petticoats, the petticoats with narrow flounces, more gracious than the horse-hair, but still excessively embarrassing; the essential was to augment corpulence, to mask leanness, and above all to follow the current of received ideas. A few true elegants invented a whalebone petticoat which resembled very nearly a beehive, all the fulness spread over the hips; the remainder fell perpendicular. Others preferred hoops arranged as bands of casks; the most modest had their narrow-flounced petticoats,

lined with coarse stiff muslin, their borders with bands of crinoline; and they muffled themselves with four or five starched stiff petticoats on rods, crossed, &c. What a weight to carry!

"As for the circles of steel which delayed not to spread themselves, not only were they ungracious, but they tossed to right and left. Often, owing to their little length, they allowed the dress to enter into the bottom of the skirt. Passing by, ladies saw gentlemen lightly smile without troubling themselves in regard to these 'underbred ones.'

"The gravest political question of the day was of no more passionate interest for Frenchmen than the question of crinoline was for Frenchwomen," M. Challamel goes on to say, who has merit enough to have his souvenirs revived here; "two camps were set face to face. In the one, the adversaries of crinoline were casting fire and flame; in the other, the supporters of the adjustment took their stand on the exigence of fashion, of which it appeared to them impossible not to follow blindly the decrees. To begin with, crinolines had become a habit, and those who bore them ill-will acquired the reputation of sorry jesters, prejudiced people, obstinate carpers. At the same time, if the balloon-like skirts were not renounced, cages and hoops were little by little abandoned, to be replaced by several starched petticoats. Here was a partial amendment; this modification combated the ridicule of crinolines;

but these struggled, many years were necessary to bring about a change which simple good taste ought to have occasioned as soon as horse-hair, whalebone, and steel springs appeared."

How much ink for and against it this improbable fashion caused to flow as well in the Parisian press as in diverse brochures, cannot easily be imagined. M. Albert de la Fizelière has written only lately an amusing little monograph on the *Crinoline au temps passé*, followed by a *Satyre sur les cerceaux, paniers, criardes et manteaux volants des femmes*, by the Chevalier de Nisard.

On the fashion of crinolines, dating from 1855, a most curious work might be written, marking the party struggles, and furnishing all the documents to be annexed to this history. We believe even that there exist two or three poems on *la crinoline*, each in ten or twelve cantos. Montaigne, in speaking of the farthingales which reigned in France, appears to have already, with his keen Gallic humour, amply summed up the question: "Why," says he, "do women cover with so many hindrances, one on the top of another, the parts in which our admiration principally lodges? and to what purpose serve those *mighty bastions—vallo circumdata*—with which women have armed their flanks, except to ensnare our appetite and drag us to them in keeping us at a distance?"

Fashions varied from 1851 to 1870 in a disquieting manner for the future historian who

would analyse them. We have been willing to run through the majority of the special journals during these twenty years, and, in addition to a prodigious headache, we have found with deep discouragement that two years of the life of a hard worker would rarely suffice for the annotations necessary to a simple historic *résumé* of this monument of costume under the second Empire. Let our lady readers—who have arrived at the present time at that ungrateful age in which one recalls one's souvenirs in reveries by the fireside—remember the different dresses they have chosen, exhibited with intoxication and cast aside one after another for other adjustments more in vogue; let them look in the bottom of their wardrobes at their *pagoda* sleeves of open embroidery, their collerettes, their kerchiefs, their cashmeres of other days; let them dream above all of the toilets of their female friends, those which have filled them with envy, the makings up which have made them jealous; they will see then that not only all these robes were vanity, but more, they will allow that their memory even is unfaithful and could not keep the impression nor the form of so many opposite trimmings and adornments of which the transformation was so treacherously insensible.

Let them recall to mind the Talma mantle, the Mousquetaire, and the rotunda, that rotund abomination which, falling over the crinoline, gave

to a woman the appearance of a sugar loaf; let them look again in thought at the Indian cashmere shawl, the Indian woollen shawl, the *mouzäia* or Tunis shawl, with its blue and white, red and green stripes; the Algerian burnous, with tassels of hair from Thibet; the "Empress mantle," the mantlets and the basquines. Let them recall, too, the hoods of unbleached cambric, trimmed with taffety ribbons, the muslin hoods lined with rose, blue, and mauve transparencies, and the woollen caps which they wore at the seaside and the country.

Without any fear of tiring them, we will make defile through their recollections the Zouave vests, the Turkish and Greek vests, the *Figaros* and the *Ristoris*, ungracious corsages which had a sort of swaggering, good-natured, and *zouzou* coquetry, a careless, indifferent sort of way with them which made them sometimes excessively provoking. Let us continue our march: here we are arrived at smooth cloth apparel, or of gros grain silk which was adorned with heavy braids or embroideries, and bordered by the skin of a dead lamb, dyed black, which went by the name of Astrakan. These braids and this Astrakan, does it not seem to you that quite a grand period of the imperial fashion defiles before you by the very magic of the image? Do you not see again these long engravings giving specimens of the Maison Gagelin, in which women, seen in front,

in profile, or behind, extended over their shoulders long houppelandes charged to excess with twists, grecques, tresses, cordelières, and fancy lace of all kinds, with military affectation, and clothed, moreover, with wide facings of black Astrakan, with curled hair, which was the height of the comfortable and the *chic?* Is this all? Not yet. Remember the little paletots known as "sailors," the yachting jackets, the vareuses, the saute-en-barque, of which you made provision in your trunks at the holiday time and the period of the country trip; these vestments were of light cloth, of English stuff, of silk poplin, of alpaca, of black taffety, with many ornaments of that same twisted fancy lace which was the folly of the day, the folly of the galloon.

Have you forgotten the *Lydia* paletot, the *Lalla-Roukh* overcoat, and the opera-cloak named *vespertina?* People wore them at the same epoch as the vests known as *senoritas* in velvet, taffety, in cashmere of bright colour or in cloth . . . And the Russian shirts? the Garibaldis in foulard, in white, red, blue, Havana, taffety, broidered with braid or Russian point? and the paletots-gilets of Louis XV., in English cloth, grey and black diaper—does this say nothing to the echoes of your spirit? Must we, not to let you rest, speak to you of the *Péplum Impératrice*, formed of a small corselet, to which was adjusted a large basque squared before and behind, very long at

the sides, a precious vestment in that it caused the fall of the crinoline, and did more honest work by its form alone than had been done by all the libels, the pamphlets, the charges, the sermons, all the eloquences of the Church and of the press united.

A manufacturer, they tell us, imagined petticoats with springs, of which a portion was detached at will; another invented a kind of transparent parasol; a third got a patent for a conception of a system of aeration in the coiffure; a fourth, in fine, sold in all Paris pot-hook springs for the use of petticoats, which he decorated with the name of *Epicycloids*. Trade industry never grew tired, the Parisian genius had good taste even in the bad tone;—*aquarium* earrings appeared, *Benoîton* gold-chains, which formed a curb beneath the chin; shoes were made of Russian leather, which was also used for girdles, with metal buckles; people loaded themselves with little chains and trinkets, and set on yellow, mahogany, tomato, and all the fashionable impossible shades of hair—which were nothing but exaggerations of the Venetian blond—hats called Trianon, Watteau, Lamballe, and Marie-Antoinette.

Oh, the horrible and cascade-like coiffures! They had a fire, a *sacré chien*, according to the lorettes of the world at that time; but, regarded from a distance, seen with the sentiment of modern taste, *what a downfall, my Emperor!*

This hair, uncombed, fluttered in dismay, mixed with shams of every sort, burnt by acid, roasted by iron, dried up by ammonia; this dead hair, which fell in curls or frisettes under the cap, was indeed the most disagreeable thing in the world, and never did decadent epoch offer us more grotesque specimens. Women seemed to take pleasure in approaching caricature, paradoxology of costume, and low jests in fashion. The more a woman showed of incoherence, of madness, of improbability in her adjustments, the nearer she was to being proclaimed the incomparable queen of fashion. The newspapers of the boulevard, which commenced now to inaugurate the business of the reporter, entered complacently into minute descriptions of the toilets which most openly bid defiance to reason and good sense. With their clubs, their immense pods on the tops of their heads, their great curl-papers slipping down behind, their rows of mats, their wavy *repentirs*, and their curled twigs which fell into their eyes, feminine faces had none of that grace which is given by a natural coiffure; it was all false, stagey, borrowed, in bad place. Often when she added to these shrubs and these cascades of hair a small cap in the form of a comfit-box, with her short dress of screaming tones, or her silks variegated after the colours of a fashionable stable, with her parasol-stick, her jewels, and her trinkets, a woman of Paris had, it must be confessed, something of a dressed-

up monkey let loose in full simian masquerade, showing a bearing full of contortions, and a mean figure in the midst of men clothed in short jackets and very tight breeches, having on their heads Tyrolese hats with peacock's feathers, ugly half-shaved baboons, no less deformed and no less badly rigged out than their female companions.

At Compiègne, at Biarritz, at Dieppe, at Trouville, at Bade, at Eaux-Bonnes, at Plombières, and in the watering towns and places of pleasure, where the female *élégantes* of fashion and the adventuresses of the golden Bohemia had their rendezvous, all the women of silver and of electro-plate, the manifestations of luxury became unlimited. It was at once a fencing-bout of fancies in dress and freedom of manners, a *furia* of extravagances, of whims without a name, of luxurious expenditures made exclusively for show. There were to be seen at the same time woollen shawls knotted with narrow red flounces, sumptuous dresses of quilted silk, skirts of faille with gold or silver wire, jackets laden with embroidery, extravagant scarves, Arab burnous with clasps of diamonds, tarlatans with gold stripes, lace with twists of the same metal, without counting the jewels, the medallions, the brooches, the crosses, the necklaces, with plates of precious stones, and all the golden baubles which they were not afraid to show even in the most modest casinos.

Ball dresses for the winter *fêtes* had accessories

of an incredible price. In 1869 the Duchess de Mouchy exhibited upon her at the Ball de Beauvois diamonds to the amount of about two millions. Her toilet was composed of a dress with a train in white gauze sown with silver; a second short skirt of currant silk formed a ruché apron; the corsage, very low, was cut square and supported by sparkling epaulettes of precious stones; a large scarf of flowers with foliage of silver catching on the shoulder, fell obliquely over the skirt.

The aristocratic woman of Paris remained, we must allow, always an individuality in the sense that she held the reins of true elegance, and passed with rare intelligence from one to another fashion without shocking good taste. She alone—*rara avis*—possessed the gift of exaggerating nothing, and when she fell in love with an originality, it was safe to follow her gracious impulse and subscribe to all her caprices of the day. The woman of Paris, through excellence and quintessence, chose with great tact and a perfect discernment her modistes as well as her dressmakers; she could not allow the *Bismark* toilets to be imposed upon her, nor the *casaque* corsages, nor the *Lamballe* puffs, nor the red poppy hats; she gave birth rather to discreet fashion, the tints of *vanille*, *amber*, *unbleached*, *olive*, repudiating the *crimson*, the *Pompadour* green, the *Solferino* red; but the quintessenced woman of Paris of whom we speak

was not always a lady of the Court or a wife of a financier: she reigned still more over the innate aristocracy of taste than over the aristocracy of the nobility.

Towards the end of the imperial reign crinoline at last entirely disappeared; women collapsed, and returned to the light dresses and a respect for nature; the Chinese skirts were, so to speak, the last marked expression of that malady of fashion which within a little impaired the indestructible reputation for good taste of the women of France.

The elegant world, the world of leisure, seemed to be full of anxiety to regain its winter quarters, so joyous were the reunions in the country houses. Hunting went on even in December, and the barkings of the packs of hounds made the great forests re-echo for a long time their wild harmony. Everywhere burst forth the sound of horns, at Compiègne, at Fontainebleau, at Chantilly, at Gros-Bois; in Touraine, in Normandy, in Nivernais, from east to west and from north to south, it was nothing but quarries of hot or cold; the mighty huntsmen were knocked up.

A run of a few steps back was taken before wintering time in order to get a better leap back, for Paris only lived at present in balls, concerts, and hops; in the world of the Court, of the aristoc-

racy, of finance, and of middle-class life, the cult of concerts and *redowas* was awakened. *Fêtes* at the house of Princess Mathilde, balls at the house of the Duchess Pozzo di Borgo, of the Countess Walewska, or of Madame de Biré; concerts or hops at the house of the Countess de Behague, of the Countess d'Indry, or of Madame Troplong. The concerts were frequently nothing but a prelude to amateur comedies and operettas; this diversion, very much in fashion, was only dethroned by the *fureur* of poses plastiques or white, which showed on Olympuses of pasteboard all the most low-necked scenes of mythology represented by goddesses of this world in fleshings. The imperial cocodettes brought a diabolical animation into the research and making up of the primitive costumes necessitated by these different tableaux of the *Judgment of Paris*, of *Jupiter and Leda*, and other subjects no less lending themselves to decoration than to lust.

Lent put no stop to this impulse towards pleasure, or to the fiery need of showing oneself at *soirées*, at the theatre, at the ball; people went indeed to Notre-Dame, to the sermons of Père Hyacinthe, who was then in great vogue and mentioned as successor to Monsieur de Barante in the French Academy; but they reflected little on these sermons of the world; they went there from affectation to hear this Carmelite, who was then the lion of the day, and to be able

to speak decently about him. Scarcely had they quitted Notre-Dame when these pious souls went at once, not to clothe themselves with the hair shirt with points of iron, nor to sleep upon ashes, but to the Italiens to applaud Patti, or perhaps to the Variétés to admire the diva Hortense Schneider and her graces lightly *chahutantes* in the *Grande-Duchesse de Gerolstein*, unless indeed they went to the *Biche au Bois* to wonder at the insane splendours of a fairyland *mise en scène;* after that they ran to sup on truffled woodcocks, and to mortify themselves with champagne.

Lent was generally the maddest and the most brilliant of carnivals. At Easter, the drawing-rooms were not yet closed; from week to week were announced the last winter *soirées*, but they always recommenced. At Madame de Saint-Agamemnon's, wrote the newspapers, the last winter *soirée*, Fraschini will sing.

At the Princess Labribescoff's last *soirée*, a proverb of Octave Feuillet will be played.

At the banker W——'s last *soirée* will be tried at a tea-table a steam machine which will beat everything known on railroads.

At the Austrian Major Zinzermann's, again irrevocably the last winter *soirée*, there will be an imitation of Thérésa.

And so on everywhere, *fêtes* by day and *fêtes* by night. The hippodrome of Longchamps had acquired again a new vogue; the Grand Prix was

attended with anxiety; *Gladiator* and *Fille de l'air* give, so to speak, a new flight to fashion; and then the Grand Prix of Paris marked the extreme hour of receptions, and announced the pleasure of a country life; racing statistics were entered into, calculations of the profits of the Count de Lagrange, of M. Delamarre, of the Baron Finot, of Charles Laffite or of M. Achille Fould. The Grand Prix of Paris took the place of the ancient promenade at Longchamps, all eccentricities of costume were seen defiling there beside the production of new toilets, carriages of the latest kind, the beauties of the world and the elegants of the demi-monde: actresses of the drawing-room and actresses of the theatre, all the human comedy was played there with great luxury of representation. 'Twas nothing but women and flowers, graces and smiles. On the evening of this great solemn day, Mabille was literally besieged.

"The ladies of the Empire," writes Arsène Houssaye in his curious and brilliant *Confessions*,[1] "were a dazzling Pleiad, all sweet with beauty, charm, and wit, more or less. Who will doubt it when I shall mention the names of the Duchess de Mouchy, the Countess de Saulcy, the Baroness de Vatry, the Countess Walewska, the Duchess de Persigny, the Countess de Moltke, Madame Bartholoni, the Countess de Pourtalés, the Princess

[1] *Les Confessions*, souvenirs d'un demi-siècle (1830–1880), par Arsène Houssaye, tom. iv.

Poniatowska, the Marchioness de Gallifet, the Countess de Sancy-Parabère, the Duchess de Morny, the Viscountess Aguado, Madame de Lima, the Baroness de Beyens, Madame Péreire, the Baroness Alphonse de Rothschild, Madame Magnan, Mademoiselle Bechwith, the Marchioness de Canisy, Madame Moulton, the Countess de Mercy-Argenteau, the Marchioness de Chasseloup-Laubat, Madame Pilié, the Countess de Castiglione, Madame de Montaut, Marshal Canrobert, the Duchess de Malakoff, General Callier, Madame Carter, Madame Jankowska, the Countess de Brigode, and Madame Carette, to make a good ending? How many others might be named who were not beautiful according to the gospel of the church of the beautiful, but were beautiful by force of wit, as the Princess de Metternich!

"With such women, the *fêtes* of the Court and the *fêtes* of the fashionable world were magical. One was not astonished at hearing it said, 'The Empire amuses itself.' Why not? People were not contented with the balls at the Tuileries where all the official world had the right of entrance; they imagined at the balls of the Empress, at those of the ladies-in-waiting, at those of some of the ministers, new pleasures, but above all costume balls with a mask for the women. Myself, at that epoch," says M. Houssaye, "have I not given in to these follies more or less innocent by my Venetian ridottos! The

Tuileries has been burnt, people dance still at the Élysée, but the cotillon is dead. Where are they, d'Aiguesvives, Castelbajac, Jaucourt? De Caux himself, who pirouettes still on his red heel, will no longer enter into a cotillon, even if the warbler Adélina sang in the orchestra. Truly there is still the cotillon, but who conducts the cotillon? The flying squadron in sober fact flies no more; the Countess Walewska is weeping for her daughter; the Princess de Metternich, that woman of Paris, has turned again a woman of Vienna. We shall pass by in their ripe beauties the Countess de Pourtalés and her female friends; but how many figures are in demi-tint which once shone out under the Court sun? General Fleury was not content with having the best table in Europe, he inaugurated fabulous *fêtes* which recalled the ancient Court of France under Madame de Montespan, under Madame de Pompadour, under Marie-Antoinette. He brought upon the scene, at the Hôtel-d'Albe, the four elements; it was not too much to receive the Empress and her decameron. It was a piece of enchantment. The General had not allowed a single woman ill-designed or ill-fitted out by nature to disfigure his legendary balls. The little tradesmen's wives of the Court were made to understand that it was not their day for wearing low dresses, so that all the chosen ones formed a company, I will not say invincible, but

irresistible. It was charming to see battling in a cotillon the fire and the water, the heaven and the earth, as they did two centuries earlier at the palace of Versailles. So much amusement was there on these occasions that the Emperor himself, who more than once had played the part of *ennui* in the *fêtes* at the Tuileries, danced gaily with the Princess Mathilde, while Prince de Metternich, or the Prince de Croy danced with the Empress. The volcanoes had been suppressed.

"And all this youth expansive, seeing that it was bursting with life and spirit and passion, where is it now scattered?" asks of himself Arsène Houssaye. "To the four corners of the world and worlds. St. Maurice, Finot, La Redorte? The Prince of Orange, Caderousse, Rivoli, Heckeren, Massa, Ezpeletta, without forgetting the figures more or less meditative, but always open: Morny, La Valette, Persigny, Girardin, Laferrière, Nigra, Mérimée, Fleury, Edgar Ney, Corregliano, Pisani? Why not cite Troplong, who loved the pleasures of others, and who might have written the code of polite society? *Fêtes* were everywhere; at the houses of the Duchess of Morny, the Duchess of Bassano, the Countess Walewska, Madame de la Pagerie, the Duchess d'Albe, the ministers, the senators. How much money cast opportunely out of window! Thus the Seine became a Pactolus, the faubourgs even grew rich, because all the fairies of labour were at

work. . . . To-day nothing is cast out of window, and Paris is fed with principles: the democracy causes dancing in others, but does not dance itself."

We have given glad welcome to our brother-author and friend, Houssaye, for he is of those who saw the Empire from a good place in the first rows in the intoxication of worldly success, and in the prime of life; he was one at all the coteries, at all the routs, at all the private and public *fêtes;* no man of letters better than he could revive his brilliant recollections of yesterday about that grand imperial kermesse of which the morrows were so sombre that we all suffer from them, as it were, a spleen of the soul and a wound of the heart. There sound in his *Confessions* the *chimes* of pleasures of an epoch when we were still on the forms of the grammar school, and our own recollections would be too naïve, too fragile, too auroral, in the true sense of the word, to have any weight, even if we had on the present occasion the least desire to call them to our aid.

We have, however, preserved in that dark chamber of reminiscences, as it were, a vague glimpse of the tableaux of that imperial Paris in which the Court giving an impulse to the town, and the town aspiring to make part of the Court, were confounded in one display of unheard-of magnificences; we see again those gilded gala equipages, blazoned, laden with powdered lackeys, those journeys home from the Bois,

sparkling with riches, costumes, and feminine beauties, when the Emperor returned to the Tuileries in the powdered haze of a setting sun. Émile Zola in the *Curée*—one of his best books, and perhaps the least known or the least appreciated—has left a masterly page about these splendours of the Champs-Élysées after a day at the races at Longchamps. We see it in full life, this Paris of lorettes, of girls, of kept women, of *rastaquouères*, at this epoch of its extravagance, and of its marvels—in 1867—at this hour in which the boulevard was nothing but a passage of princes, and everywhere shone the pantagruel ensign which Rabelais put on the pedestal of his immortal and colossal monument : VIVEZ JOYEUX.

This boulevard crowded with men and women promenading, we behold it again in thought like that kaleidoscope of which Delvau speaks, on which persons and things diversely, but always picturesquely coloured, changed at every step and at every moment, and all the society of Paris had its representatives, from the duchess to the cocotte; from the artiste to the cocodès ; from the man of letters to the speculator on 'Change ; from the fundholder to the rough ; from the beggar to the city man ; from the working-man to the idler ; from Turcaret, in short, to Monsieur Prudhomme. All this world aspired to *chic*, to elegance, to style, to success with the women, and to epicurean delicacies. We see it again in the evening, this boulevard of the Empire, when the different battalions of Cythera

were descending the heights of the Rue Bréda, fortified with smiles and ogles; the dollymots, the ladies of the Boulevard de Gand, the hinds, the painted ladies, the ladies of Musard's, of the Pré-Catilan, the whole series of lorettes, with their ruffled chignon, their cap over their ear, their short skirt indented at the bottom, their corsage open at the breast, and wearing about their waists long floating sashbands, which were, so to speak, the standards of gallantry. Seated at tables, from the hour of absinthe, in front of the café, provoking, with plastered faces, reddened lips, smoking cigarettes, they showed, the knee lifted on a little bench, their high-heeled boot, with its silver tassel half-way up the leg and imprisoning a red-stockinged calf. Strangers, barons of Gondremark defiled along the pavement, with kindled eye and moist and laughing mouth, regarding this market of pleasures, thorough women-jobbers, seeking, like new Paris, upon whom to bestow their apples. Upon the pavement defiled, too, the men about town of Paris, men on the political and society papers, who felt themselves at home; next, in deafening cries and the noises of carriages and hawkers, passed along the eternal street boy in his blouse, his hands in his pockets, his looks stealthy, like a ferret, yelling out the absurdities of the street, the fatuous *Hé! Lambert!* or some song of the boulevard recently come into fashion.

The ball night of the ancient Opera, all the particular physiognomy of the Boulevard des

Italiens comes back to our memory; it was a veritable mass of Clodoches, of nurses, of babies, of lumpers, of can-can dancers, uttering inarticulate sounds, convulsive hiccoughs, addressing one another in the popular gabble in an indescribable hurly-burly, whilst on all sides the speakers of the Punch shows clove the air with their rallying and strident cries. The cafés flamed and blazed, there was a very delirium in that gallant and popular return from the courtille. In brief, from the highest to the lowest rung in the social ladder, the Empire amused itself.

In the restaurants at night, all aglow with illumination, the *fête* continued; on every story was a sound of revelry; pianos uttered their wheezy cries mingled with bursts of laughter, with the stamping of the dance, with the clatter of piled-up plates, with songs not without choruses, with any amount of chatter. In the dawn, the taverns vomited forth revellers and girls with fagged faces, the while matutinal Paris showed, in the grey, dull, and desolate loneliness of the boulevard, the sweepers at their work, or the rag-pickers, types which have now disappeared, tearing down the advertisements of the spectacles of the preceding night.

The Parisienne of the second Empire will take, we are sure of it, in the history of this century a distinct and quite separate type. In spite of the short distance which years have as yet given, we can yet judge of the relief which everything which

touches the second period of the Empire gains more and more every day. The posthumous *Mémoires* which have been lately published after the MSS. of Horace de Viel-Castel, that sceptical writer of calumny, offer already an interest in reading, like the anecdotes of Tallement des Réaux; from all sides curious documents are being collected about the men and women of the second Empire, and, as we believe, it will not be necessary to wait for the first days of the twentieth century to be able definitively to judge as a whole this reign of twenty years and to know precisely whether the moral philosopher was right when he wrote this aphorism :—

"The degree of abasement of a nation is measured exactly by the degree of effrontery which its women can without scandal attain in public."

# FEMALE CONTEMPORARIES.

# *FEMALE CONTEMPORARIES.*

## *THE END OF THE CENTURY.*

JUDGMENT of our female contemporaries is certes by no means an easy matter. After having run through the history of the Frenchwomen of this great nineteenth century—across fashions, manners, anecdotes, through all its little picturesque and seductive districts—we have scruples in approaching this dangerous physiology of the modern woman. To speak the truth, to manage properly so complex a study, we must undertake it boldly, in the fashion of our ancestor Restif de le Bretonne, who, better than Brantôme, conse-

crates to the romantic analysis of the ladies of his time more than forty volumes, in which he hesitates not to catalogue the Parisian ladies of the eighteenth century, in the different classes of society, from the top to the bottom of that ladder which the Revolution was to turn upside down.

But here we study not, scarcely do we look in the face of the *silhouettes* which pass by, to note in a lively manner some small details seized in the prism of costumes and fashions. The female contemporary, under her diverse aspects, realistic romance writers are on the spot to give her in detail, with all unhealthy complaisances and all improper perversities; they quit her not . . .; these amiable vultures ransack her palpitating flesh, and expose her nerves, her heart, and her brain. They have shared among them the inheritance of Restif. Some have laid their claws on the lower parts of our "female contemporaries of the common;" others, more eclectic, dissect at leisure the courtesan or the woman of the world; others, again, who set up pretensions to the *Comédie humaine*, run through the "graduated female contemporaries" in all their tints.

If we are to believe these demoralising moralists, the Parisienne of this end of the century would be a little monster no less of a rogue than of a coquette, cruel to an unheard-of degree, and so essentially governed by her senses and her libertinism that we must never think of

trusting her with our faith, our heart, or our repose. We have sometimes, we must confess it, a better opinion of our fellow-citizenesses, and, beside them, of certain women who are but the giddy products of nature. We think, with Goldsmith, that the modest virgin, the reasonable spouse, the prudent mother, are far superior to all the women who fix the attention of the world, to all the heroines of romances whose sole occupation is to assassinate humanity with the arrows of their wit or the looks of their beautiful eyes. We have been able, in a preceding work, to speak straightforwardly of *la Parisienne moderne*.[1] We have regarded physiologically that feminine aristocracy which is not to be found in its true mean except in a great city. We cannot to-day recur to this subject, and we will only regard our female contemporaries from the special point of view of psychology and taste, allowing ourselves at the same time a very sober *résumé* of the different circumstances which have principally favoured the blossoming of the manners of the day.

This cult of women, a cult idealised in a paganism full of politeness and of urbanity, professed at beauty's altar by a thousand discreet homages, or an exquisite gallantry, this cult which was comprehended so well by the "honest gentleman" of the ancient courts, is unhappily no longer

[1] *Son Altesse La Femme.* Paris, Quantin, 1885.

of our time. The woman of this end of the century reigns despotically still over our hearts, but she has no longer the same happy influence over our spirits, our manners, and our society. The easy life of drawing-rooms, of clubs, of reunions of pleasure, where men may smoke at their ease, talk without restraint in terms with short frocks and sometimes complaisantly gross, has stolen from us little by little the beneficent intimacy of women. Politeness in the sense of sociability is dead, so to speak, in France; there exist still good manners, considerations, which answer certain tendencies of character, certain exigencies of interests; but politeness, refined, delicate, precious, all made up of affability, of forethought, of delicate attention, disappears every day more and more out of our little world, Egoistic and *Americanised*, in which every one with dominant preoccupation thinks of himself.

That politeness of other times with regard to women was, as Roqueplan defined it, a science, or rather an art, composed of natural tact and acquired sentiments, an exterior affability, which borrowed nothing from falsehood or disguise, but slipped like a soft intermedium between all contacts and rencounters; it was a grace which divested contradiction of all which it possessed to wound, and diversity of character of all it possessed too personal; that politeness of conciliation and of high distinction finds no longer to-day its

employment in our feverish existences and our personal affronts.

Perhaps, it will be said, we have no longer the time to be polite, to envelop our phrases in set forms of decorum, to search about for periphrase, metaphor, to employ the exordium and other oratorical precautions; but this want of politeness in our modern relations is assuredly the evident and primordial cause of that kind of derangement of our society and of that state of independence, of vulgarity of language, of eccentric bearing, of unconscious neurosis which characterise the woman our contemporary.

She feels herself abandoned, poor thing! divested of all that made her once sovereign; she has something of that mystery, of that sadness, of that cold commonplace of a church deserted, from which the holy sacraments and the sacrifices of worship are banished. Goddess without an Olympus, she seeks everywhere the spark of her divinity; and seeing that men have unlearnt the way to her temple, she has cast herself into the extravagances of the outer world, whipping up her life after the example of the males, making herself even masculine, forcing herself to think no more, to dream no more, to reign no more, scared, dizzy, running her head against every place on her way, like some light swallow suddenly deprived of her nest.

During the eighteen years of the monarchy of

July, a new social world had formed itself and developed by degrees; the romances of Madame Sand, of Balzac, of Soulié, the poems of Alfred de Musset, of Lamartine, and of Victor Hugo had impressed a special fold upon the characters of the young women of the last generation; all were greedy after homages and celebrity. "Extravagant boldness, elegance somewhat cavalier-like, little politeness, even with the best air; nerves without vapours, a sensibility susceptible of profound emotions, but only for positive causes, and above all for questions of interest; such are," wrote Dr. Véron, as a keen observer, "the distinctive traits of women more or less politic, more or less in the fashion under the reign of Louis-Philippe."

"From this moment," says the author of the *Mémoires d'un Bourgeois de Paris*, "there was the reign of the Faubourg Saint-Honoré, of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, and very soon the accession of the Place Saint-Georges. Every quarter of Paris set up, in fact, different manners, of which the contrast could not in any fashion be calculated or appreciated at a distance. There were seen to appear, aspiring to the frivolous and transitory celebrity of fashion, young women having charm without doubt, elegance always, but an elegance more constantly rich and exquisite, a certain *esprit*, but returned to practical matters which the vapourish intoxicated no longer; a pre-

cision of end and will, which was followed without effort in the midst of the most diverse and the most brilliant dissipations. In this world fortune held a great place, as always, but a place certainly more estimated and more marked, people took pleasure in making their riches seen, either by costly dresses or by exquisite equipages carefully harnessed, or by a luxury of furniture, excluding neither the arts nor rare curios. It is impossible to challenge or disregard these distinctive traits of women of fashion under the monarchy of July; it would be sufficient to cite a few names, if one dared to allow oneself to personify and to *illustrate* these light studies."

Under the second Empire, the French women did nothing but accentuate the tendencies which have just been exposed, losing the while a great deal of her politeness and some little of her discreet grace. At this epoch we saw with great sadness the confusion of the social world; courtesans, celebrities of eight springs who had kept themselves hitherto in the social penumbra, began to advertise themselves in the full light. They hid themselves no longer now in close boxes or still more close broughams; they gained little by little the best of the pavement, every day more hardy, more desirous to hold their place in the sun. The *demi-monde* was created; the press encouraged the unclassed, spoke of their beauty, of their charm, of their natural wit, vaunted the

good taste and the eccentricity of their toilets; all the gazettes talked about these queens of the left hand, whose loves were no longer clandestine; reporters penetrated the boudoirs of actresses, of lorettes, and of gay girls; they spoke in turns of Alice Ozy, of Madame de Païva, of Esther Guimond, of Andréa la Colombe, of Mogador, of Cora Pearl, of Finette, of all the *unheardofs* of high and low gallantry; the public became interested in these creatures for whom it elevated all of a sudden a sort of pedestal. Well-born women busied themselves insensibly with the manners and fashions of these dames of little virtue; women of the world and the *demi-monde*, who were secretly acquainted by the reciprocal confidences of a husband or a common lover, who served as a link of connection between, came to observe one another as rivals, to measure themselves on the same footing of equality, to elbow one another on the hippodromes of the races, at the Opera balls, in the kermesses and charity *fêtes;* they had the same dressmakers, the same modistes, and in a trial of beauty and elegance they wrestled boldly in the matter of freedom and of *chic*. It was a total revolution in our manners, an '89 of a new kind in which the rights of a woman of the town were demanded, for, as a certain man of wit charmingly observed, "the femimine rabble had opened on their own account a states-general."

It was complete anarchy; the *world*, in its acceptation of supreme politeness, existed no longer; social reunions were rare, drawing-rooms were unpeopled; the Faubourg Saint-Germain ceased to attract all the aristocracies of other times; only interests, ambitions, pleasure met under the same roofs, and gave a false semblance of life to ancient French society. Our governors, renewing the question of Louis XIV., who often in the matter of a complex solution asked, *What's Ninon's opinion?* might in their turn demand in a thousand and one cases, *What may be the sentiment of these good ladies?*

Our female contemporaries are, we must allow, the victims of that social state against which they cannot rise in rebellion; delivered over to themselves, habituated to all the confusions of classes, of ranks, of manners, forced to indulgence, to compromises of dignity and of conscience, they put up with the current morality which drags them sometimes further than they would go; their life is thus deprived of its orbit, of its equilibrium, without centre or balance; they fall, in consequence, into extremes of the *better* or of the *worse*. The women of the present feel that it is no longer in good taste, as under the Restoration, to hide their sins, to veil their soul, and to shelter their sentiments in the tender and secret nest of

chilly and delicate things; the majority, while advertising after the fashion vices which they do not possess, superficial and affected extravagances, remain, in secret, misunderstood, rebels against the encroaching pedantry, and saddened by that existence for them so commonplace, so empty, so hollow, and so full of despair.

After the cruel war of 1870–71 laughter was extinguished in France, however literature and art tried to revive the old Gallic spirit, the broad jokes of another age, the juicy tales and the sprightly stories. In despite of all these titillations of the spleen and of the brain, laughter burst out frankly no more in our country, with its clarion sonorousness, with its strident Gallic crow. French laughter, alas! is now nothing more than the pale smile of a convalescent, a nervous, benevolent, superficial, saddened, almost bloodless smile; gaiety is no longer in the heart of the nation, the country pouts and is in despair, like a player who has been beaten, wounded in his pride and in a rare confidence in his star.

To our women of the world there only remains the art of coquetry, the pursuit of dress, which are like times of repose in their latent *ennui*. Crouching in their interior, they strive to people their solitude with gay and dazzling nicknacks, with colours which set clear and fresh marks in the grey monotony of their days.

They borrow from the Orient its warm lights of

art, its shimmering draperies, its eccentric motley, its chromatic marvels. They dote upon Japan, its crépons, its paintings or stuffs, for they find everywhere in these exquisite conceptions fresh auroras, astonishing flowery landscapes, poetic reveries full of birds, flowerets, irises, and fruits incarnadine. Their imagination suddenly revives at the sight of these fantastic skies, broken by pure pale tones; their dream loses itself in prismatic horizons which create, thanks to the mirage of their eyes, a charming pseudochrome, an evocation of appearances without end, drowned in the illusions of distance.

We see them by day, clothed on with an exquisite grace, promenading in grand bazaars of novelties, searching, ferreting, cataloguing silks, woollens, linens, all the little futilities of the toilet; greedy of good bargains and wholesale sacrifices, women of *bric-à-brac* and of stores, spending without care, without need, through whim or ill-defined caprice, for want of occupation, the *ennui* of home, the solitary freezing shudder of their soul, drives them abroad and conducts them in search of distraction and forgetfulness into these vast magazines, where they prowl incessantly, chatter without reason, finding in the midst of that feminine crowd, in those crushings, and crumplings, and continual wanderings to and fro, a sensation as it were doubly-distilled, trebly-complex of moral intoxication, profound and unhealthy, and undergoing a

sort of impulse of activity which drives them out of themselves and that languor which troubles and terrifies them more and more every day.

Modern fashions are related essentially to this unquiet searching and artistic spirit of our female contemporaries. The toilet of the present day demands from art its best creations, and some few of our fashions are nothing but simple copies of the pictures of masters. The art of woman furnishes occupation on every side; all which can contribute to her grace, to the beauty of her form, to the charms of her face, is studied with minute care. For the last ten years old patterns, old stuffs, ancient lace and guipures, the old point, which made the celebrity of certain countries, have been generally recalled into honour. Contributions are taken from every side according to good taste and the character of the physiognomy; in the same reunion will be seen a camail of the Regency beside a laced jacket in the style of the Marguerite of Faust, a corsage inspired by the Restoration, and not far from a skirt falling straight down after the manner of the toilets of the second Empire. Cosmopolitism and the past, women live in them both at once; they look at the engravings of fashions, obtain inspiration, con-

found, unite, and often out of a dozen dissimilar toilets conceived at intervals of twenty years create a type of costume original, charming, of ravishing taste. The male and female dressmakers of Paris—the Worths, the Laferrières, the Felixes, the Pingas, the Rodrigueses, and also the sisters Duluc, those admirable artistes in dresses and in mantles, revive in their inimitable toilets the whole history of France. Does fashion exist still among such fantastic creators? One would suppose the contrary. The Fashion of fashions tends more and more to make its appearance. This new usage will inaugurate a general uniform for busy people, hasty and without taste; for the profane who do business in ready-made apparel, as others refresh themselves with Duval soup, whilst it will bring into being a variety of eccentric costumes without expression or character absolutely defined; without cohesion, but original individually, and always to be sought by the veritable elegants who care still for their personality and a distinctive mark.

It is easy to see that for the last fifteen years women of the great world have withdrawn themselves more and more from the tyrannical influence of a reigning fashion; all go in the van; the crowd follows, but the *élite* feels only her own inspiration and depends only on herself or on her creative dressmakers. Simplicity alone dominates everywhere to-day, and remains the delicate work

of *bon ton*, of distinction, and of the true aristocracy of taste.

The conclusion of this book is before our eyes. We should run the risk assuredly of passing for a miscreant or for a bungler in the mind of our lady readers in wishing to expose here and complaisantly detail the varied types of the costumes of the day, or to tumble over all the catalogued robes of the *Bonheur des Dames*. Easy as it may appear to show ourselves here an analyst with all the hair on, under an original form, we willingly renounce making a display of this small vanity. We have written this work, after our inspiration, as a simple idle tour across society, its manners, and its researches in the art of clothing. It is not, properly speaking, either a history of our usages or a *tableau* of Parisian elegances; it is rather a series of views of the frivolous life of this century, an instantaneous panorama in which we have tried to unite, as it were, the furtive sensation of worldly pleasures at certain dates of the nineteenth century, so prodigiously swollen with events. We have sketched with the pen the moving physiognomy of the coquetries of the toilet, bringing to them as much as possible a sort of local colour, as an extract of the ambient air, special to each epoch, in all these light descriptions. Arrived at the end of our journey, these pages, as

a whole, do not absolutely displease us, even though they shock us occasionally by reason of the strangulation desired and forced by the details, and also by the want of air and of *mise en scène* in the exhibition of the costumes. Be it as it may, this labour of a monograph, trifling, capricious and independent, jerky and incoherent as it may appear, will have the merit of being placed in the vanguard of all the publications which before long will appear in the grand and wonderful social manifestations of the nineteenth century. We have reduced our pretensions to a small form, to be the better received by the generality of readers; if some day we undertake a History of the Fashions of 1789 to the present time, we shall be assuredly more grave, more majestic, more solemn; we shall then be consulted as an old conscript father of minute, logical, and systematic erudition, but, alas! we shall no longer be read as a young and simple tumbler of the fancy, as it is yet optional for every one to read us to-day, always supposing that anybody should care for these soap bubbles edulcorated with historic notions and very largely added to from a pansophy mixed with rose water.

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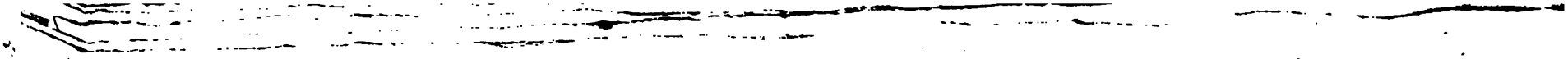

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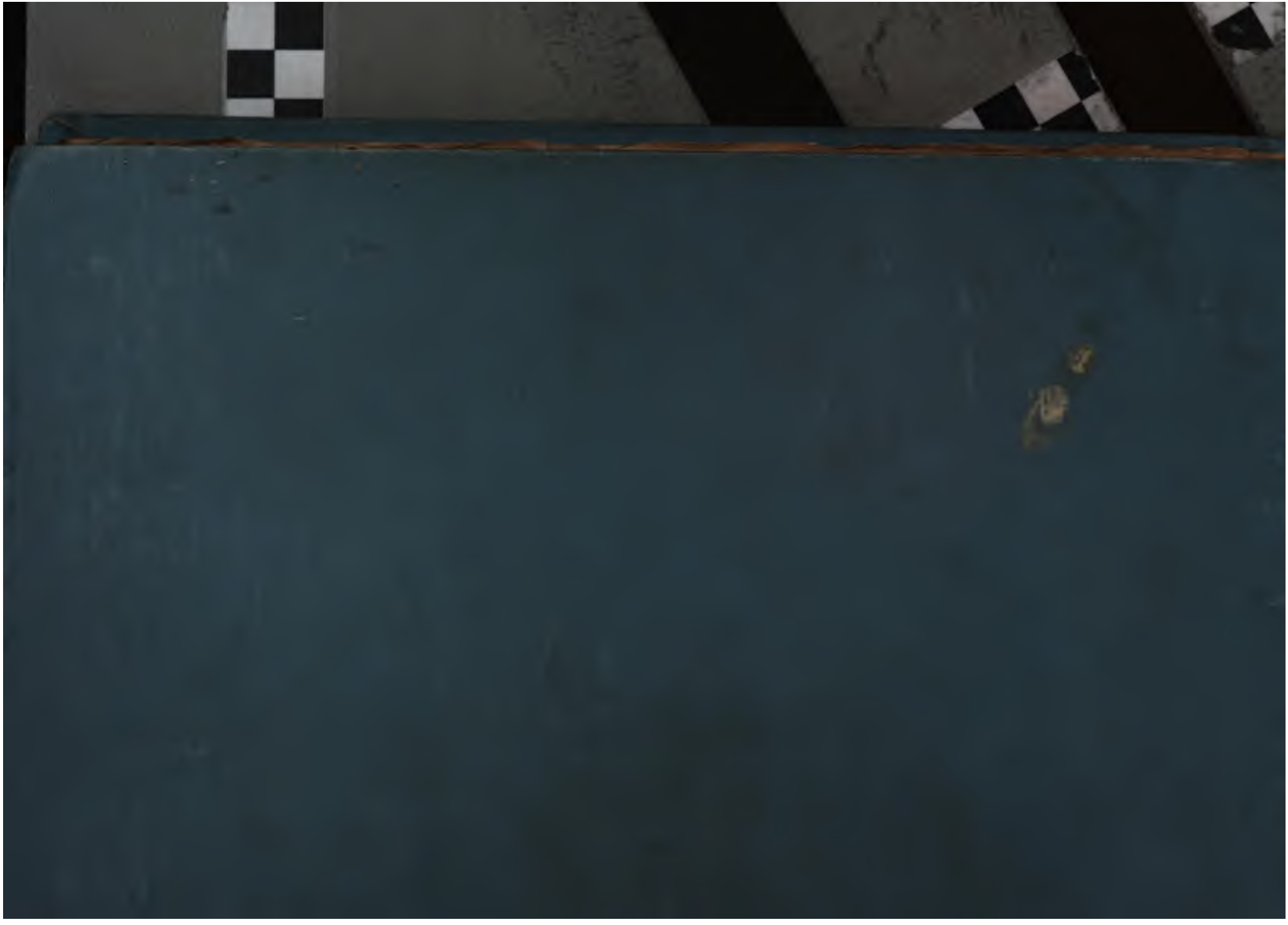
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